# THE PAULINE UNDERSTANDING OF "THE LAW OF CHRIST"

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Theology

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by

Kieth Arnold Gerberding

May 1971

Approved by: Martin H. Scharlemann
Advisor

Frederick W. Danker
Reader

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TABLE OF CONTENTS


| Chapter | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| I. | PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS | 1 |
| | Introduction to the Problem | 1 |
| | A Lack of Precedents | 5 |
| | Qumran | 8 |
| | The Rabbinic "Law of the Messiah" | 11 |
| | Fundamental Appraisal of Paul's Use of nomos | 12 |
| | Paul's Discussion of Law Dependent on a Variety of Situations | 21 |
| II. | IS "THE LAW OF CHRIST" A REFERENCE TO JESUS AS THE NEW LAW-GIVER? | 30 |
| | Jewish Expectation of New Developments in the Torah | 31 |
| | Paul Goes Beyond Jewish Expectations: Christ is the New Torah Personified | 36 |
| | The "Law of Christ" Not a Reference to Words of Jesus | 41 |
| | Paul Avoids Appealing to Dominical Commands in Corinthians | 43 |
| | Commands of Christ in the Context of Gal. 6:2 | 45 |
| III. | "THE LAW OF CHRIST" REFERS TO A NEW FACT OF HISTORY: CHRIST HAS FULFILLED AND SO REPLACED THE LAW FOR US | 62 |
| | Christ has Fulfilled and so Replaced the Law | 62 |
| | Christ has Fulfilled and Replaced the Law for Men | 75 |
| | Summary | 86 |
| IV. | LIFE "IN THE LAW OF CHRIST" IS ACTUALIZED BY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST | 88 |
| | The Spirit Transmits the Work of Christ to Men in Christ | 88 |
| | The Law is Fulfilled by "the Law of the Spirit of Life" | 99 |
| | The Spirit of Christ has Replaced the Law as the Determining Factor for Christian Living | 114 |
| | Summary | 119 |
| V. | "IN THE LAW OF CHRIST": CONTINUING OBLIGATION TO THE LAW OF GOD | 121 |

Chapter Page

The Old Testament Remains as a Valid Revelation of God. . . . . 121
Righteousness by Faith in the Old Testament. . . . . 122
Paul Adduces the Old Testament as Evidence . . . . . 125
"In the Law of Christ"--Free to Do the Will of God . . 127
Obligation of Obedience and the Spirit . . . . . 130
The "Law of Christ" and Old Testament Law. . . . . 131
Paul Makes a Variety of Appeals to Motivate Christians to Fulfill the Law of Christ. . . . . 132
The Law of Christ and the "Law of Love". . . . . 133
The Appeal to Mosaic Law . . . . . 136
Summary. . . . . 145

CONCLUSION. . . . . 146

BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . . 149

# CHAPTER I

## PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

### Introduction to the Problem

Borrowing a line from Ethelbert Stauffer, Richard Longenecker claims that

> It is the hope of every interpreter of Paul "to find the proper way to a theological understanding of the apostle's teaching about the law, which, in spite of much labour, has not yet been adequately dealt with."[1]

A quick glance at almost any Pauline bibliography will remind one of the quantity of major and minor works written on the subject of Paul's teaching about the law. Yet neither the bulk of words and pages so far produced, nor the lack of any significant new evidence excludes the desirability to do a fresh investigation of Paul's presentation of the law. New statements can easily be justified in view of the common misunderstanding of the role of law in Paul's theology and the inadequacy of many published studies of the same. It is important for the church adequately to understand how Paul relates the law to his proclamation of the gospel of the crucified and risen Lord. This last reason is undoubtedly the most important of all.

One phrase in particular has caused difficulties for interpreters of Paul. It is the expression "the law of Christ" (ho nomos tou Christou,

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[1] Richard N. Longenecker, Paul, Apostle of Liberty (New York: Harper & Row, c.1964), p. 109. Cf. Ethelbert Stauffer, New Testament Theology, translated from the German by John Marsh (New York: The MacMillan Co., c.1955), p. 90.

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF

Gal. 6:2), to which the phrase "in the law of Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21) is a parallel. Similarly we have "the law of faith" (Rom. 3:27), and "the law of the Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2). In the words of Peter Blaeser, these phrases require "special handling."[2]

For Paul, Christ had replaced the law as the way of salvation (Rom. 3:21-30; Gal. 2:16-20). Indeed, after his conversion Paul could state clearly that God had always called men to himself by promise (Gal. 3:16-18; Rom. 4:10-24a). The law did not enable men to achieve righteousness (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 3:21-22). It condemned men, making sin manifest (Rom. 2:12; 3:9-19; 5:13,20; Gal. 3:10). The law aggravated man's situation by creating specific occasions for rebellion against God (Rom. 7:17-13).

It is puzzling, then, to hear Paul affirming the validity of the law, as he does in his letter to the Romans (3:21,31; 7:12,16) and in the first letter to the Corinthians (14:34). It seems to be a contradiction in terms when Paul combines "law" and "Christ" in the expression "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). The purpose of this study is to find out what Paul means by this phrase and those phrases which are similar (1 Cor. 9:21; Rom. 3:27; 8:2), in view of his teaching on law and the revelation given in Christ.

It is necessary to review Paul's use of nomos in general and to examine interpretations which have been given for "the law of Christ,"

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[2]Peter Blaeser, "Gesetz und Evangelium," Catholica, XIV (1960), 13.

with a view to explaining that Paul might have borrowed the phrase. This will be done in the first chapter.

Chapter II will offer an examination of one explanation which has been proposed. The remaining three chapters will attempt to provide an understanding of the phrase in the light of Paul's conviction that Christ has ushered in that new aeon in which "the law of Christ" signifies the obedient response to the revealed will of God, a response effected in Christ under His Spirit as Lord.

The expression "the law of Christ" has been assigned various meanings. Though omitting any reference to the Pauline passage (Gal. 6:2), Bernard Haering used the terms "the law of Christ," "Christ our law," and "Christ the law of the Christian" without defining precisely what these phrases mean.[3] He assumes that the idioms refer to the new situation in which the Spirit of Christ enables one to live morally. He does not comment on whether they indicate the extent to which the law is an obligation or a guide when he emphasizes that the Christian is not lawless. Without defining in detail what the expression designates, other interpreters understand "nomos" in the phrase as meaning "principle,"[4]

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[3]Bernard Haering, "Paulinische Freiheitslehre, Gesetzesethik und Situationsethik," Analecta Biblica: Studiorum Paulinorum Congressus Internationalis Catholicus, 1961 (Romae: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1963), I, 165-173.

[4]J. F. Walvoord, "Law in the Epistle to the Romans," Bibliotheca Sacra, XCIV (1937), 20, 285; D. E. H. Whiteley, The Theology of St. Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1966), p. 75; cf. also C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (New York: Harper & Row, c.1957), p. 83.

"rule,"[5] "religion,"[6] "order,"[7] "force,"[8] or "an interior Dynamism."[9] In the article cited above, Burton described the expression as meaning both "the revealed will of God in general" and "ethical principle."[10] Whiteley, discussing the expression at another point in his work, mentions the rabbinic "Torah of the Messiah" and suggests that nomos may mean "a new law of a different order altogether."[11] This idea will be discussed in the next chapter.

At least one commentator has suggested that Paul employed nomos in an ironical fashion as part of his argument. Jakob Jonsson asserts that Paul approved nomos for his Jewish-Christian opponents with "a twinkle in his eye" (Gal. 5:23), indicating an ironical use of "law," since it is clear that salvation is by the Spirit (Gal. 3:2-3).[12]

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[5]Hermann W. Beyer and Paul Althaus, Der Brief an die Galater, of Das Neue Testament Deutsch (9th edition; Goettingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, c.1936, 1962, 1965), VIII, 51; Christian Maurer, Die Gesetzeslehre des Paulus (Zurich: A. G. Zollikon, 1941), p. 5; Walvoord, XCIV, 23.

[6]Barrett, pp. 83, 155.

[7]Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1949), p. 312; Beyer and Althaus, VIII, 51.

[8]Ernest D. Burton, "Redemption from the Curse of the Law: An Exposition of Galatians 3:13,14," The American Journal of Theology, XI (1907), 634; R. McL. Wilson, "Nomos: The Biblical Significance of Law," The Scottish Journal of Theology, V.1 (1952), 43.

[9]James Burtchaell, "A Theology of Faith and Works: The Epistle to the Galatians--A Catholic View," Interpretation, XVII (1963), 45.

[10]Burton, XI, 628.

[11]Whiteley, p. 86.

[12]Jakob Jonsson, Humor and Irony in the New Testament (Reykjavik: Bokautgafa Menningarsjods, 1965), p. 226.

The weakness of all these interpretations is that they fail to take sufficient account of the significance of nomos in the experience and thinking of Paul, a point to which we will return later in this chapter. The assumption is that nomos occurs in the phrases under consideration merely as a play on words. But this ignores the possibility that Paul is trying to make a substantial comment on the role of the law in relation to the gospel. Yet that very relationship is being discussed in the places in which the expressions appear. There must, therefore, be some other interpretation.

## A Lack of Precedents

If it could be demonstrated that Paul in these instances was using a well known mode of expression, the meaning might be said to be apparent at once. It is necessary to examine the literature with which Paul was probably familiar in order to search for precedents which may have influenced him.

The Septuagint does not use any of the phrases that occur in Paul: "law of Christ (Messiah)," "law of faith," or "law of the Spirit of life."

The meanings of several expressions in the Septuagint in which nomos is employed provide no parallel or precedent for the Pauline phrases. "The law of the Lord" (ho nomos kuriou) occurs frequently throughout the Septuagint. In the New Testament Luke alone employs this phrase. He does so only in the second chapter of his gospel, where the context emphasizes the fulfillment of Old Testament promise. Paul does not use "the law of the Lord" but refers three times to "the law of God"

(Rom. 7:22,25; 8:7), a phrase which also occurs in the Septuagint. "The law of Moses" is a phrase occurring frequently in such writings as Tobit, Daniel, 4 Kings, 2 Chronicles, 1 and 2 Esdras. The phrase "the law of the Most High" occurs especially in Sirach (9:15; 19:17; 23:23; 38:34; 41:8; 42:2; 44:19; 49:4). The phrases listed in this paragraph all seem to refer to the law of God revealed in the decrees of the written or oral tradition.

Nomos occurs combined with other expressions. In Malachi 2:6 we have nomos alētheias ēn en tō stomati autou. This is certainly not to be understood as "the principle of truth," but "the law which is true," or "the law which is God's faithful word of truth for men." We have a comparable assertion in Psalms (118:142) (LXX), where God is praised with the words, "Your law is truth." The same thing is said of his commandments (entolai, verse 151), and of his words (logoi, verse 160).

In Wisdom 2:11 we have ho nomos tēs dikaiosunēs, which Charles translates as follows: "But let our strength be to us a law of righteousness. For that which is weak is found to be of no service."[13] Because according to the context sinful men are speaking, one might be tempted to translate, "Let strength be our rule for what is righteousness," indicating that their principle was "might equals right." But nomos here should be taken as law in antithesis to the law of God; for in the very next verse we read of the righteous man whose criterion is the law.

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[13]R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), I, 538.

In Malachi and in Wisdom, then, we have unusual phrases which may be considered as parallel to Paul's expressions. Both of these passages employ nomos with reference to "the law of God," and not to a "principle."

One passage may be thought of as providing a precedent for at least one of the phrases which Paul wrote. Judaism considered the law as the source of life for the wise (compare Prov. 13:14). In Sirach (17:11) we read prosethēken autois epistēmēn, kai nomon zōēs eklērodotēsen autois. According to Charles, the Syriac version has "covenant" in place of epistēmēn. The Septuagint translator read berith as binah. Charles interprets the phrase as "the law of life; that is the law which gives life, the Law of Moses."[14] The same expression occurs again in Sirach (45:5), where the meaning again seems to be that the law gives life, a thought enunciated already by Ezekiel (20:13). The law that is spoken of (Sirach 17:11), being parallel to "covenant" in the first half of the verse, is the Torah.

The same idea is expressed in later intertestamental literature, as in 4 Ezra 14:30: "Our fathers . . . received the Law of life, which they kept not . . . ." In Baruch IV.1 we read that all who grasp the law receive life. Later rabbinic authors expressed the identical idea. Charles quotes Midrash Sifre (84a): "as water giveth life to the world, so do the words of the Torah give life to the world."[15] In Aboth (2:8) we read "more Torah more life," and, "he who has acquired words of Torah

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[14] Ibid., I, 376.

[15] Ibid.

has acquired for himself the life of the world to come."[16] There is accordingly a tradition of teaching in Judaism that the law gives life.

The phrase from Sirach, "the law of life," can thus be considered as a partial precedent for Paul's words in Rom. 8:2, "the law of the Spirit of life." The crucial difference in Paul is his awareness that the Spirit of Christ had come and that He gives life according to the terms of the new aeon. The meaning of the Pauline passage will be considered in detail in Chapter IV. The point to be noted now is that at least the contour of Paul's phrase occurred in the Septuagint with reference to the Torah. If Paul had the earlier expression in his thinking at all it may indicate that nomos in Rom. 8:2 should be taken seriously as referring to the law of the Old Covenant and not be translated merely as "rule" or "principle." Nevertheless, the expression in Sirach, at best, was adapted by Paul and was not determinative for his theology.

## Qumran

The published scrolls from the Dead Sea community do not contain any close parallel to the Pauline phrases, whether the term to be considered is torah or mizwah or hoq. In one passage we might see an abstract usage, with reference to something other than divine or community law: "The Angels of Destruction . . . walk according to the

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[16]Translation from The Ethics of the Talmud: Sayings of the Fathers edited by R. Travers Hereford (New York: Shocken Books, c.1945, 1964), p. 48.

precepts of Darkness (bhuqe quoshek)" (1 QM SIII, 12). These "precepts" may be thought of as statutes deviating from the written or oral statutes of the community. This is preferable to positing an ironical or figurative interpretation for "precepts," not only because of the plural form, but also because we do not have other examples of such a use in the scrolls from the Dead Sea.

A phrase reminiscent of Wisdom (2:11) occurs twice in the same chapter; namely, "the statutes of righteousness" (huqe haçedeq, CD XX, 11, 33), where the meaning "Torah" is confirmed by the parallel appearance of "covenant." The Torah is that recognized by the community, of course, even as the "righteousness" must be defined in terms of Qumran. But the reference is certainly to normative law and not to "principles." In any event, these passages provide little basis for being considered as precedents for Paul. If the verbal dissimilarity between hoq and torah could be overlooked, the literary parallel might again suggest that nomos in the Pauline phrases be understood as in some way including Torah.

In 1952 Ethelbert Stauffer suggested that a phrase occurring three times, hoq haruth (1QS 10:6,8,11), translated "engraved law," should instead be pointed hoq heruth, "law of liberty." He proposed that "the law of liberty" was a liturgical designation for the Manual of Discipline.[17] If this opinion were correct, we would have not only a precedent for the phrase occurring in the Epistle of James but also a figurative use of

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[17]Ethelbert Stauffer, "Das 'Gesetz der Freiheit' in der Ordensregel von Jericho," Theologische Literaterzeitung, LXXVII (1952), cols. 527-532.

"law" which might be offered as a model for an abstract use of "law" by Paul. But Stauffer's conjecture was largely refuted in an article appearing the following year by F. Noetscher, who pointed out that in the passage "engraved law" makes much more sense than "the law of liberty."[18] Noetscher claimed that *heruth* was not a Biblical word and first appeared later (Aboth VI, 2). However, the latter claim may be invalidated. Strack-Billerbeck lists rabbis from around 150 who read the *haruth* of Exodus (32:16) as *heruth*, "freedom."[19] This moves us eighty years closer to Qumran, and thus within reach of an oral tradition which may have been current at the time of Paul.

According to Martin McNamara,

> Paul is clearly attacking the Jewish view of the Law in 2 Cor. 3,7ff. which saw the place of the Law in the divine economy of salvation in a false perspective. It is quite possible that in 3, 7.17 he is directly polemicizing against an interpretation that took Ex. 32,16 as implying the liberty of those who observed the Law. We find a similar understanding of the verse in M. *Abot* 6,2 . . . . We can be quite sure that such a view of the Law was current in Paul's day and this liberty may well have been seen implied in the Hebrew word *haruth* as the Mishnah text just cited sees it.[20]

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[18]F. Noetscher, "'Gesetz der Freiheit' im NT und in der Moenchsgemeinde am toten Meer," *Biblica*, XXXIV (1953), 193-194. Compare Ex. 32:16 also.

[19]*Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, edited by Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, c.1926), III, 508. This work of six volumes will hereafter be cited as Strack-Billerbeck.

[20]Martin McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966), p. 170.

There may, therefore, have been a literary prototype current by the time of Paul which could be considered to have served as an example for the expressions coined by Paul in the passages under consideration. It must be remembered that this is only a possibility. At any rate, even the literary parallel is not exact enough to assert that a pattern existed which must have influenced Paul, or which would explain what the Pauline phrases mean.

## The Rabbinic "Law of the Messiah"

Billerbeck cites a rabbinic passage which speaks of "the law of the Messiah." He comments that "Von einer Tora des Messias hat man auch in rabbinischen Kreisen geredet . . . . Doch ist uns der Terminus nur einmal begegnet." The reference is to Midr. Qoh. 11, 8(52a): "Die Tora, die ein Mensch in dieser Welt lernt, ist Nichtigkeit gegnueber der Tora des Messias."[21] Thus there is one direct parallel to Paul's "law of Christ." There are two objections to concluding that Paul was reflecting acquaintance with a Jewish "law of the Messiah" when writing to Corinth and Galatia.

The first objection has to do with dating. The Midrash in which "the law of the Messiah" occurs may or may not contain a tradition which goes back to the time of Paul. The term could have been used then because certainly the idea of messianic law was prevalent, as Billerbeck

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[21]Strack-Billerbeck, III, 577.

indicates.[22] Nevertheless the fact that there is but one instance of "the law of the Messiah" means that we have insufficient evidence to suppose that Paul borrowed the phrase from an already established Jewish teaching. One must consider the possibility that the passage containing the Midrash was constructed with Paul's phrase as the model.

The second objection has to do with the point of reference. Paul's understanding of the coming of Christ and the new age was radically different from the idea of a new messianic law, as will be discussed in the next chapter. This difference diminishes the significance of seeking a prototype for Paul's expressions. This does not preclude the possibility of finding a literary model.

In conclusion, let it be said that in literature which could have influenced Paul, we do not have firm evidence for the existence of precedents for the Pauline phrases. The one verbal parallel may be too late to have influenced Paul, and has a different point of reference. Yet its existence points to the possibility of the currency of such language. It is noteworthy that, in the expressions examined, "law" seems to be divine or community law rather than an abstract term.

## Fundamental Appraisal of Paul's Use of nomos

### Customarily refers to Mosaic law

Paul does not work with the Greek understanding of law. He does not proclaim any natural law, despite the appearance in Romans chapter 2

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[22] Ibid.; infra, the first section.

of terms used in Greek natural theology. Nothing in Paul shows how the universe provides a natural knowledge of law,[23] as distinguished from a knowledge of God (Romans 1).

Paul was a Jew and his view of the law was Jewish. Paul showed his appreciation of the law as the gift of God to Israel, for instance when he spoke of "we ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners" (Gal. 2:15). Paul's exegetical method reveals his Jewish background in interpreting the law, though by comparison he made moderate use of the logical techniques of his rabbinic school.[24]

Paul shared the Jewish understanding of law as the will of God for His people revealed in the Old Testament. Paul's starting point is in fact "the use of nomos for the specific OT Law."[25] In particular, nomos

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[23]Cf. Hans Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers, c.1969), p. 221: "In his use of the formula 'written on their hearts,' Paul is not influenced by the idea of agrapha nomina, but by the written law; 'it is occasioned by the contrast between this law and the law recorded on the tablets and in the book of Moses,' to 'warn the Jews not to rely on the mere possession of this written tradition.'" Conzelmann is quoting Pohlenz, whose work he cites along with that of G. Bornkamm. See also Hermann Kleinknecht, "nomos," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittell, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1967), IV, 1035, footnote 36: "No Gk. could speak of the nomos tes hamartias as Pl does in R. 7:23 (cf. 1 C. 15:56)." Kleinknecht cites Chrysipp. Fr. 1125 to the effect that to Greek eyes "the law could not be one of the causes of transgression." This Dictionary will hereafter be referred to as TDNT.

[24]E. Earle Ellis, Paul's Use of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), pp. 46, 53-55.

[25]W. Gutbrod, "nomos," TDNT, IV, 1069.

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF

designated the Mosaic law. This developed in Judaism before the time of Paul. "In the Chronicler and the later psalms . . . there is a change in content, since the Pentateuch as a whole is now called the Torah."[26] Gutbrod writes of the time of the Maccabaean era in later Judaism that "along with the predominant sense of God's commanding will, however, nomos can often mean the Pentateuch, of which the Law was felt to be the main part."[27] In the rabbinic era, Torah is preeminently used for the Pentateuch. The dominant position of the Pentateuch is reflected in the words of R. Jochanan, "Prophets and scriptures will come to an end, but not the five books of the Torah."[28]

In most cases there is little doubt that Paul is speaking of the Mosaic law.[29] Paul can even use nomos to refer to the specific commandments of the Pentateuch, as in Rom. 7:7-8; 13:8-10. Paul customarily has in mind the Mosaic law when he employs nomos; one can expect at least overtones of a reference to Jewish law in every occurrence of the word in Paul.[30]

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[26] Ibid., IV, 1046.

[27] Ibid., IV, 1047.

[28] Ibid., IV, 1057.

[29] Paul Demann, "Moses und das Gesetz bei Paulus," Moses in Schrift und Ueberlieferung (Duesseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1963), p. 238, who adds of nomos in Paul, "Es bezeichnet die im Pentateuch enthaltene Thora des Moses und ihre traditionalle Auslegung, vor allem als Lebensregel und als Weg betrachtet, auf dem man zur Gerechtigkeit gelangt."

[30] Cf. Peter Blaeser, "Das Gesetz bei Paulus," Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, edited by Max Meinertz (Muenster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1941), XIX 1-2, 27.

Not merely opposed to legalistic interpretation

Some have attempted to explain the phrase "the law of Christ" and similar expressions by claiming that Paul was opposed only to a legalistic interpretation of the law; Paul was proclaiming the eternal moral value of the law. Chapter three will attempt to make clear that Paul was declaring something far more than this; namely, that Christ has actually replaced the law for us. But it should also be pointed out that Paul did not work with a concept of the law that could be separated into commandments, on the one hand, and permanent ethic, on the other. The law itself was inadequate, according to Paul; it was a temporary provision.

Commenting on Gal. 2:19 and citing Rom. 2:13 as evidence, Burton asserted that Paul would not say that he died to the law "conceived in the broad inclusive sense of the word." Only "the legalistic meaning meets all the conditions of this verse and the context."[31] Concerning Romans 7 he says,

> There he tells how the law--by ho nomos he doubtless means the Mosaic law in its legalistic interpretation--had by his experience under it taught him his own inability to meet its spiritual requirements and its own inability to make him righteous, and thus led him finally to abandon it and to seek salvation in Christ.[32]

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[31]Ernest D. Burton, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 132.

[32]Ibid., p. 133.

But the reverse is true. Paul did not turn to Christ because he discovered that legalism was a religious failure, but because the risen Christ had appeared to him as the new revelation.

Burton is one of several commentators who have attempted to interpret nomos in Paul on the basis of the presence or absence of the definite article. He quotes an article by Slaten as support.[33] The idea was proposed as early as 1865 by Joseph Barber Lightfoot,

> The written law--the Old Testament is always ho nomos. At least it never seems to be quoted otherwise. Nomos without the article is "law" considered as principle, exemplified no doubt chiefly and signally in the Mosaic Law, but very much wider than this in its application.[34]

The interpretation promoted by Slaten and Burton was being perpetuated as late as 1937, in an article by J. F. Walvoord.[35] This is surprising, because even before the turn of the century, Edward Grafe raised convincing arguments against the theory. Grafe pointed out that in Rom. 13:10 nomos without the article refers to the Mosaic law. He explained that the article is lacking because plēroma is without the article.[36] Paul could omit the definite article because nomos was being used as a

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[33] Ibid., p. 454. A. Wakefield Slaten, "The Qualitative Use of nomos in the Pauline Epistles," The American Journal of Theology, XXVIII (1919), 213-219.

[34] Joseph B. Lightfoot, The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1950), p. 118.

[35] Walvoord, XCIV, 16-22.

[36] Edward Grafe, Die paulinische Lehre vom Gesetz nach den vier Hauptbriefe (Freiburg: Akademische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1893).

technical word, a proper name for the Mosaic law. There are countless precedents for this usage in the Septuagint. For the most part, rabbinic writings omit the article.[37] The use of the article cannot be determinative for the meaning of nomos in Paul.[38]

Burton understood the legalistic character of the law to be in effect only until the time of Christ, while the ethical principles had lasting validity. He proposes a division between form and content, the content being continued in the "law of love."[39] The distinction cannot be substantiated from the text, and in addition has serious theological consequences. It still leaves room for boasting in performing the works of the law. Only in Christ is the law fulfilled. The man in Christ is to be bound to Christ, not to the content of the eternal moral law. He is called to obedience to Christ. Paul is not interested in differentiating between the remitted and the remaining commands. He calls men to the mercy of a gracious God who has effected a new creation. The moral principles are just as much gramma as are the ceremonial prescriptions. One who takes his stand under the moral law, however simply that may be defined, is still a slave to the old age and is not a recipient of the free gift of God in Christ.[40]

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[37]Gerhard Friedrich, "Das Gesetz des Glaubens Roem. 3,27," Theologische Zeitschrift, X (1954), 403-404.

[38]For a complete discussion of the theory and its refutation see Blaeser, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, XIX, 1-22, where he argues against the proponents of the theory, one at a time, denying in particular the contention of Slaten.

[39]This theory will be discussed in Chapter V.

[40]See Blaeser, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, XIX, 241, and see further Maurer, p. 82.

GENDERING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF

No sharp differentiation between moral, ritual, and civil law

Paul does not see a difference between the moral content of the law and the law as applied legalistically through human misunderstanding. Nor does he promote a sharp distinction between the basic moral content of the law and the ritual or civil commands. Christoph Haufe is one of several interpreters who have attempted to separate cult-law from ethical law. Haufe wishes to solve the problem of the seemingly antithetical assertions concerning the law by claiming that the negative statements on the law have to do with Jewish or Judaistic observance of cultic precepts. He maintains that "the command to love" is Paul's way of demanding obedience to the moral law. He suggests that according to Romans 13 the decalog is still the norm, and that Romans 14 shows Paul requiring compliance to the moral law. Haufe declares that, much like Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, Paul thus deepens the understanding of the Old Testament law.[41] Such an interpretation separates Galatians 6, Romans 13 and 14 from Paul's proclamation of the gospel in the earlier chapters of each letter.[42]

There is, however, no basis in Paul's works for proving such a division between ritual, civil, or moral law. Moreover, one should not assume that Paul differed from contemporary Judaism, which treated the

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[41]Christoph Haufe, "Die Stellung des Paulus zum Gesetz," Theologische Literaturzeitung, XCI (1966), col. 177.

[42]This will be discussed further in Chapters II and V below.

law as an indivisible whole.[43] When Paul asserts that "all who rely on works of the law are under a curse" (Gal. 3:10), he is not suggesting that this applies to only part of what is written in the book of the law. The law is a unit. What makes the question of the role of the law so difficult is the fact that for Paul the whole law is God's good gift. The tension produced by Paul's discussion of the law cannot be reduced by imposing a distinction foreign to his own expression. Paul's reluctance to cite the Old Testament also indicated his concern to show that the age of the law has been replaced by the new age with Christ.[44]

Torah as Scripture and as demand

It is tempting to suggest that Paul saw a division between words of the Old Testament as divine revelation and other words which were sheer demands, the latter now being obsolete. Indeed, Paul himself could appeal to words of promise in the Old Testament in order to proclaim freedom from the demands of the Torah. Burton attempted to assert that the "curse of the law" spoken of in Gal. 3:10 was a curse pronounced by "the legalistic passages" of the Old Testament, to which Paul denied "all value and authority, as if, that is, it were a work of the devil."[45] This is a gratuitous assumption that runs counter to

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[43]Blaeser, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, XIX, 14; Longenecker, p. 119. See also Blaeser, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, XIX, 63, 71.

[44]See Blaeser, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, XIX, 229, and Chapter V below.

[45]Burton, Critical and Exegetical Commentary, pp. 168, 170.

Paul's attitude to the holy law revealed in the Old Testament. Even Verweijs claims that Paul distinguishes between law as Torah, the divine salvation in the Scripture, and law in the narrow sense of the law of Moses, the law of Sinai.[46] This understanding of law in Paul too easily removes the tension produced by Paul's seemingly contradictory statements on nomos. In the first place, it provides an explanation other than the central concern of Paul's proclamation: the new event is the gift of God in Christ in the new aeon. Paul is not promoting a better understanding of the law. He is calling for a recognition that any boasting for self-glory in the old aeon or the new is a refusal of the mercy of God, now manifested in the death and resurrection of Christ.

A second objection to the division of nomos into Torah, Scripture, on the one hand and into the demands of the Old Testament on the other hand is that such a split is hardly to be discerned in Paul's letters. There is a bifurcation of law into its functions of killing and of testifying to life that runs diagonally through its division into Scripture and demands.[47] In 2 Cor. 3:6 the written law is a letter which produces death instead of the life engendered by the Spirit. But in Rom. 3:21 the Old Testament Scripture is promise, attesting to God's righteousness manifested in Christ, in agreement with the gospel.

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[46]Peter Gottvied Verweijs, Evangelium und Neues Gesetz in der Aeltesten Christenheit bis auf Marcion (Utrecht-Holland: Drukkerij Em Uitgeverj H/V Kemink En Zoon N. V. Domplein, 1960), p. 55.

[47]Maurer, p. 90.

In Rom. 7:7,5 the ethical demands of the law serve as an occasion for sin, resulting in death, while in Rom. 8:4 the ethical demands of the law are fulfilled, through the Spirit of Christ. In Gal. 3:22 it is impossible to separate prophetic Scripture from the hard demand. The difference in each case is Christ, not the ability to distinguish between the law as Scriptural revelation or as legalistic demand.

The key to understanding Paul's phrase "the law of Christ" and similar statements is not to be found then in positing various uses of nomos by Paul which are to be understood by the readers of his letters. For Paul, nomos is the Mosaic law, the Torah of Judaism. Wherever nomos occurs in Paul's writings, this basic sense should receive first consideration in attempting to interpret the passage at hand.[48]

At the same time what Paul has to say about the law depends on the situation to which he is addressing himself; and that must be determined by the context of his letters. To this consideration we now turn.

## Paul's Discussion of Law Dependent on a Variety of Situations

### Paul's letters not systematic literary expositions

The epistles of Paul are letters, written to communicate a message from Paul to one of the churches. They were not, in the first instance,

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[48]Fred W. Danker has demonstrated that in certain contexts Paul can, however, shift the meaning of nomos from the Mosaic code to a more general sense. See especially pages 430-431 of "Romans V. 12 Sin Under Law," New Testament Studies, XIV, (April 1968), 424-439.

produced for posterity. They were written and delivered to meet a current need. In his assessment of Paul's epistles a half century ago Deissmann betrays a little bias but also offers a valid observation:

> Their non-literary characteristics as letters are a guarantee of their reliability, their positively documentary value for the history of the apostolic period of our religion. . . . The strange attempt to paste them together mechanically, in the belief that thus Paulinism might be reconstructed, will have to be given up. Thus Paulinism will become more enigmatical, but Paul himself will be seen more clearly . . . . All the traces of systematization that are found here and there in him are proofs of the limitation of his genius; the secret of his greatness lies in religion apart from the system.[49]

It certainly is too much to claim that Paul would refuse to be a systematician in the strict technical sense; but in general, his discourse was situational. His theology is not so much a theoretical outline as an application of his faith to a particular problem.

### Paul's theology of law derives from conflict of the Church with Judaism and Judaizers

Paul recognizes the law as expressing the holy will of God. Thus he affirms both its historical role and its continuing validity.[50] His sharp criticism of the law stems from its use by some to serve as an access to salvation. He refuses to grant that the law should become a basis for boasting. That would only enslave the man in whom the Spirit of Christ has deigned to dwell.

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[49]Adolf Deissmann, Light From the Ancient Past (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), p. 240.

[50]This will be discussed in Chapter V below.

The law had assumed a role of inordinate importance in Judaism.[51] The extent of this "importance" and the problem it forced upon Paul's Jewish contemporaries will be discussed in Chapter IV below. The point to be made here is that neglect of the practice of the law separated one from Judaism.[52] Paul's preaching of Christ as the One who provides healing for mankind "created a most serious rift between Jew and Gentile."[53] Paul had to discuss the role of the law because of his proclamation of the gospel. And "by virtue of his commission as apostle to the Gentiles he had to come to grips with the question of the Mosaic law as related to the saving purposes of God."[54]

When the church comes into contact with Judaism, the question of the role of the law must naturally come to the fore. In letters of Paul addressed to those churches which were confronted by Jews or Judaizers, we find discussion of the law. The most notable example of Paul's argument reflecting the conflict of the situation is that found in his letter to the Galatians (1:7; 2:4).

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[51] Martin H. Scharlemann, Stephen: A Singular Saint (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, c.1968), p. 101. See also Samuel Sandmel, The Genius of Paul (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Cudahy, c.1958), pp. 46-47: "Greek Jews focused their attention on Judaism as though it was both in essence as a totality law and nothing but law . . . . The whole cast of mind of Greek Jews, especially as evidenced by Philo, is shaped by the unquestioning acceptance of the premise that Torah meant Law."

[52] W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: SPCK, c.1948), pp. 72, 74.

[53] Scharlemann, p. 133.

[54] Ibid., p. 130.

The differing situations of the various churches

In Paul's various letters the law receives diverse attention. In some the law is not mentioned, while others present the role of the law throughout the message. Some commentators have suggested that there is a development in Paul's theology which accounts for the changes in his discussion of the law. But Paul's theology is basically the same throughout his letters.[55]

In his epistles to the Thessalonians Paul does not even mention the law, either by name or by circumlocution. Nor does Paul use dikaioō or dikaiosunē in the same letters. Evidently Paul was not required by the situation in Thessalonica to comment on the role of the law in relation to his gospel of Christ, nor to warn his readers about nullifying God's justification by attempting to be vindicated on the basis of their own performances. Paul could demonstrate the truth of the gospel, even employing the Old Testament to do this, to gain his converts without having to deprecate the law. If Jewish Christians would arrive in an area and ask whether or not the Old Testament law had to be kept, or insisted that Gentiles keep it, then it would be necessary to elucidate the implications of the gospel for a proper understanding of the law.

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[55]See Paul Feine, Das gesetzesfreie Evangelium des Paulus nach seinem Werdegang dargestellt (Leipzig: 1899), p. 171, as quoted in Otto Kusz, "Nomos bei Paulus," Muenchener Theologische Zeitschrift, XVII (1966), 194.

There are indications in the first letter to the Corinthians that the question of the role of the law was not a burning issue. In the first place, we see that Paul feels free to appeal to the law several times for support of his argument.[56] It is noteworthy that in each case the law is called upon to confirm a point already made. Only in 1 Corinthians does Paul use a formula like "it is written in the law of Moses."[57] In Rom. 7:7 Paul can point out what the law says, but that is not an appeal to the law for support of his argument. Three times in the letter to the Romans (9:15; 10:5,19) Paul invokes Moses. But he does not employ nomos there, as he does in 1 Corinthians, though his appeal certainly is to what is written in the law of Moses.[58] Paul can cite what was "written for our instruction" (1 Cor. 10:11), and can even call his converts to "keeping the commandments of God" (7:19). In only one passage (1 Cor. 15:56) is anything negative said about the law.

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[56]This will be discussed below in Chapter V.

[57]Cf. 9:8,9; 14:21,34. Nils a Dahl, "Paul and the Church at Corinth in 1 Cor. 1:10--4:21," Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox, edited by W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr (Cambridge: The University Press, 1967), p. 328, suggests that some in Corinth were exercising their wisdom as interpreters of Scripture (1 Cor. 1:20, note the terms sophos, grammateus, and suzētētēsin), and Paul might have been agreeing to play the game according to their rules, and thus uses the quotation formulas.

[58]1 Cor. 9:9, "it is written in the law of Moses" would indicate that for Paul an appeal to "Moses" is equivalent to an appeal to the law of Moses; but the omission of nomos compared to the phrases in Corinthians may show Paul's concern with the problem in Romans.

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF

In the context of the discussion about the eating of food in accordance with heathen customs (1 Cor. 8:1-9:23; 10:14-33), Paul not only declares the Christian's freedom to partake but the freedom to abstain, to be "as one under the law" (9:20) for the sake of the brother. Evidently there was no controversy concerning the role of the law. There seems to have been no need for Paul to insist upon Christian freedom from nomoi. The discussion is here not concerned with observance of the law but with weakness of faith under the threat of the power of demons.[59] In this situation, Paul omits any detailed consideration of the role of the law as relating to life in the new aeon. This does not mean that Paul's whole theology is different here, or that his concern with the role of the law in later times caused him then to develop a theology of the law basically different from his earlier assessment.[60] 1 Cor. 15:56 says the same thing about law aiding the power of sin that is expressed in greater detail in Rom. 7:7-11.[61] The situation in Corinth evidently did not evoke the detailed exposition of the role of the law which Paul was prompted to produce in writing to Rome.

The situation in Rome is different. Paul addresses himself to the pressures of both Judaism and antinomianism. Paul makes clear that

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[59]Verweijs, p. 67.

[60]As one among many, Maurer, p. 61, points out that the differing situations of Paul's addressees explains his varied presentation of the law, not some inner development in Paul.

[61]Compare Verweijs, p. 67.

Jewish boasting over the possession of the law is invalid, yet he is at pains to present the validity of the revelation of God to Israel. The law is the unwilling agent of sin, even "the law of sin and of death" (Rom. 8:2), and yet the letter is punctuated with exclamations defending the law (3:31; 7:7,12,14,16; 9:31). In an article that will be discussed in Chapter III concerning "the law of faith," Hans-Werner Bartsch has suggested that there were two factions in Rome, one boasting of their new found "faith" and the other taking pride in their Christian obedience to the law, following the pattern of Judaism. Paul's letter is an attempt to call both to abandon their self-glorying and "with one voice to glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."[62] The occasion of Paul's letter is not the desire to write a theological treatise but to speak to the situation of the deficient attitude of the Christians in Rome.

Another situational explanation for the law-gospel balance of the letter is offered by M. Jack Suggs, who proposes that Paul is writing a conciliatory letter prior to a trip to Rome to gather funds for Jerusalem.[63] Verweijs also notes that Paul is not delivering a theoretical exposition, but has in mind a direct practical goal for Jews and Gentiles; that they understand clearly their new position in

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[62]Rom. 15:6, "The Concept of Faith in Paul's Letter to the Romans," Biblical Research, XIII (1968), p. 47.

[63]Hans-Werner Bartsch, "The Word Is Near You!: Romans 10:6-10 Within the Purpose of the Letter," Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox, p. 298.

Christ. In order to understand Paul's statements in Romans concerning the role of the law, one ought not look so much at the inner development in Paul's theology as at the situation of the church in Rome.

Galatians, at the opposite extreme from Thessalonians or Corinthians, is a Kampschrift,[64] in which Paul must confront a bewitching attempt to compromise the faith through judaizing practices. Therefore Paul makes clear the curse of the law and its opposition to faith (Gal. 3:10-13). Paul marshals all his arguments against a situation in which the Galatians sought to be justified by works of the law (passim). But the basic view of the role of the law is still not different from that of the other letters. The law is still not against the promises of God (3:21), and although those who are led by the Spirit are not under the law yet they are called to fulfill the law, the "law of Christ" (5:18,14; 6:2). The death-dealing character of the law described in 1 Cor. 15:56 and Rom. 7:7-11 is pictured in Galatians also (Gal. 2:19; 3:13).

Paul's arguments concerning the role of the law do not reflect a developing Pauline theology as much as specific concerns he had in mind when addressing a particular church.[65] This fact must be recalled

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[64]Blaeser, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, XIX, 233, who also claims that Paul's differing expositions of the law are dependent on differing situations.

[65]In addition to the references above, this understanding is reflected by Conzelmann, pp. 164, 273, 279-280; Victor Paul Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, c.1968), p. 12 (where he questions the possibility of reaching a consensus about development in Paul's thought), and pp. 73, 210; and John Coolidge Hurd, Jr., "Pauline Chronology and Pauline Theology," Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox, p. 247.

when one attempts to interpret Paul's language and phraseology in any one letter.

In this introductory chapter we have seen that a variety of interpretative words have been sought to translate nomos in the Pauline phrase "the law of Christ." Most require the assumption that Paul is using nomos metaphorically or as a play on words. These interpretations do not see Paul imparting a definite "law" meaning to nomos in the expressions being considered.

In attempting to find a precedent for "the law of Christ," we discover that we do not have firm evidence for an actual prototype of the Pauline phrase. In the parallels which do exist, it is apparent that "law" is used regularly of divine or community law rather than as an abstract term or as a play on words.

Paul customarily uses nomos in terms of Jewish thinking, most commonly referring to Mosaic law. There is little basis to the assertion that Paul intended a qualitative understanding of nomos, or that he distinguished between various functions or modes of the law. One cannot attempt to interpret "the law of Christ" on the basis of choosing one of a variety of meanings for nomos.

Finally, when considering any phrase or statement of Paul relating to the law, one must interpret in the context of the situation to which the particular letter was directed.

GEMEROTHG - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF CH

## CHAPTER II

## IS "THE LAW OF CHRIST" A REFERENCE TO JESUS AS THE NEW LAW-GIVER?

We have seen that most traditional interpretations of "the law of Christ" fail to take seriously Paul's use of nomos in its usual reference to the Mosaic law. Though one can find potential precedents for the Pauline phrase, no direct dependence on an actual prototype can be substantiated.

It has been suggested that Paul's expression reflects an earlier Jewish understanding of a "law of the Messiah." C. H. Dodd has attempted to explain the phrase "the law of Christ" as used in Gal. 6:2 and 1 Cor. 9:2 by suggesting that Paul is referring to a "new Torah," consisting of sayings of Jesus.[1] Though he does not wish to confine the connotation of the phrase "to the comparatively restricted body of traditional Sayings of Jesus," he claims that "that which the Lord 'commanded' and 'ordained' remains the solid, historical and creative nucleus of the whole."[2]

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[1]C. H. Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," More New Testament Studies (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1968), pp. 134-148.

[2]Ibid., p. 148. Similarly, W. D. Davies claims that "Paul must have regarded Jesus in the light of a new Moses, and that he recognized in the words of Christ a nomos tou Christou which formed for him the basis for a kind of Christian Halakah . . . . We have seen, however, that we can accept Paul's use of nomos tou Christou quite simply as a description of the New Torah that Jesus supplied in His words." Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: SPCK, c.1948), p. 144.

In this chapter we will evaluate the claim that "the law of Christ" refers to words of Jesus to which Paul appealed as the authoritative norm of Christian conduct. The procedure will be to examine Jewish expectations of new developments in the Torah which might hint that Paul's phrase reflected an anticipation of the Messiah as a giver of new Torah, and to briefly examine whether that expectation matches Paul's understanding of the Messiah. Then Dodd's article will be evaluated for its significance and validity.

## Jewish Expectation of New Developments in the Torah

### Some expectation of the end of the old Torah

Stressing the understanding of Christ as "the end of the law" (Rom. 10:4), H. J. Schoeps claims that such a Pauline inference is represented in rabbinic Judaism. "A specially widespread opinion in rabbinic literature is that in the Messianic era the old Torah will cease altogether with the evil impulse, but that God will give a new Torah through the Messiah."[3] Schoeps quotes Schweitzer's affirmation that the late Jewish apocalypses "nowhere assert that the law will operate in the Messianic kingdom, and never do they describe its life

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[3]H. J. Schoeps, Paul (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, c.1959, 1961), p. 172. Schoeps adds in a footnote that "the destruction of the evil impulse in the Messianic time--often inferred from Ez. 11:19 and Joel 2:18--is a current rabbinic theme (cf. Volz, Eschatologie, op. cit., 42 Ia). Targum on Is. 12:3 and Othnioth d. R. Aquiba (Beth ha-Midrash, ed. Jellinek III, 27): The Eternal sits and examines a new Torah which he will bestow in the future through the Messiah."

as that of the perfect fulfillment of the law."[4] Schoeps claims that the writings of Philo also imply the cessation of the law in the Messianic kingdom.[5]

Judaism expected a new Torah in the future world. It would be inscribed in the heart of the individual and would make the Torah one learns in this world appear as nothing by comparison.[6] Jahweh himself will impart this Torah,[7] or the Messiah will give new Torah.[8] Davies finds as the most unambiguous reference to a new Messianic

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[4]Schoeps.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, edited by Herman L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, c.1924), IV, 2, 918: "Midr Qoh 2,1(12b): R. Chizqijja (um 35) hat im Namen des R. Simon b. Zabdai (gegen 300) gesagt: Alle Tora, die du in dieser Welt lernst, ist Eitelkeit gegenueber der Tora in der zukuenftigen Welt (=Tage des Messias): denn in dieser Welt lernt ein Mensch Tora und vergiszt, aber in der Zukunft (=Tage des Messias)--was steht da geschrieben? Ich will meine Tora in ihr Inneres geben Jer 31,21." Hereafter this work will be cited as Strack-Billerbeck.

[7]See G. F. Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era (Cambridge: The University Press, 1932), III, 85: "God says: 'In this world I have given to you the Law, and individuals work laboriously in it, but in the future (Tanhuma, "in the world to come") I am going to teach it to all Israel, and they will learn it and not forget it (Jer. 31,33).' . . . And again God says to Abraham who observed even the minute deductions: 'Thou hast taught the sons Law (Torah) in this world, and in the world to come I, in my glory, will teach the Law (Isa. 54,13).'" See also W. D. Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come, Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, c.1952), VII, 35-38.

[8]Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age, VII, 47, says on the basis of the Damascus Fragment IX:5-9, "the Damascus Fragment envisages a teaching Messiah who will reveal new truths out of the Torah."

Torah the Yalqut on Isaiah 26 which reads, "The Holy One . . . interprets (dwrsh) to them the grounds of a new Torah (twrh hdshh) which the Holy One, blessed be he, will give to them by the hand of King Messiah."[9] Here should be added the Midrash saying which occurs once, "The law which a man learns in this world is nothing compared to the law of the Messiah."[10]

W. H. Brownlee has found an indication of Jewish expectation of new Torah in the Messianic Age in the way in which an Isaiah scroll was edited in Qumran. The Qumran text of the complete Isaiah scroll has substituted the third masculine singular for the first singular possessive suffix at three points in Is. 51:5, indicating that in verses 4 and 5 the terms "law," "justice," "deliverance," and "salvation," are personified in the Messiah.[11] In view of the use of "salvation" as a designation of the Messiah, Brownlee claims that the Qumran editing points to a hope for the Messiah as a "New Law": "The Messiah is not only one who will present new teaching, but he will himself be the perfect example of it and will be its motivating force."[12]

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[9] Ibid., VII, 74.

[10] Strack-Billerbeck, III, 577: "Midr. Qoh 11, 8 (52a): Die Tora, die ein Mensch in dieser Welt lernt, ist Nichtigkeit gegenueber der Tora des Messias."

[11] William H. Brownlee, "The Christ As the 'New Law'," CXII, 10. Note the entire series from November 29 through December 27, 1954, in five successive weekly issues.

[12] Ibid.

GENBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF C

Expectation of modification is more common

There is some indication that new Torah, in content or form, was expected; but there is far more evidence for the hope that the Messianic Age would bring modification and clarification of the Torah. Clear testimony exists for the conviction that the Torah lasts forever and is immutable. We read in Baruch iv.1, "This is the book of the commandments of God, and the law which exists forever." Two passages in Philo have been taken as examples of Jewish teaching that the law is perfect, super-natural, eternal,[13] and accordingly unchangeable.[14]

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[13]See Ralph Marcus, Law in the Apocrypha (New York: AMS Press, c.1927), p. 46: "There is a passage in Philo, De Spec. Legibus lib. 1 #41 (M. II p. 216), where, probably under the influence of Stoic doctrine, he compares the law-abiding and pious life with writing engraved on the 'pillars of nature.' It is not clear whether this is merely a picturesque expression of the Stoic teaching on 'living in accordance with nature,' or a vague allusion to the eternal character of the law." See also Christian Maruer, Die Gesetzeslehre des Paulus (Zurich: A. G. Zollikon, 1941), p. 8: "Schon im rabbinischen Judentum finden sich Ansaetze zu diesen Aussagen. Himmel und Erde moegen vergehen, aber die Tora wird nicht vergehen."

[14]See Moore, I, 269: "This law, being perfect, is unchangeable. The Law that was in time revealed in writing and by word of mouth to Moses is the same that was with God before the world was created . . . (Philo, Vita Moses, ii. 3:14-16). Philo, contrasting it with the ever changing legislation of the other nations, writes: 'The provisions of this law alone, stable, unmoved, unshaken as it were stamped with the seal of nature itself, remain in fixity from the day they were written until now, and for the future we expect them to abide through all time as immortal, so long as the sun and moon and the whole heaven and the world exist.'"

The Messianic Torah was not to replace the Mosaic Torah, but would bring a new interpretation of it.[15] The Messianic Torah would indeed be the old Torah. Some rabbis taught that the Torah preexisted in eternity and could not be expanded. At the same time, the very role which the Torah had assumed in Judaism forced the expectation of a Messiah who would come with new power to teach the Torah effectively.[16] The law would be in force in the Messianic Age and be studied and observed better than before.[17] If the voice heard from Mount Sinai

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[15]Strack-Billerbeck, III, 577: "Von einer Tora des Messias hat man auch in rabbinischen Kreisen geredet; aber man verstand darunter nicht etwa eine Tora, die die Tora Moses verdraengen u. sich an deren Stellen setzen werde, sondern eine neue Auslegung der alten Tora, die der Messias in der Kraft Gottes bringen u. lehren werde, so dasz seine Tora gewissermaszen wie eine neue Tora erscheinen werde."

[16]Ibid., IV, 1: "Ein Volk, das der Schriftgelehrsamkeit die hoechsten Ehren zuerkannt u. seine groeszten Koenige als Interpreten der Schrift gefeiert hat, muszte zuch in seinem Messias einen Lehrer der Tora erwarten. . . . Ja, jene Erwartung ging so weit, dasz man sogar von einer neuen Tora redete, die der Messias bringen werde, u. die man geradezu als 'Tora des Messias' bezeichnete. Doch darf amn das nicht so verstehn, als ob diese neue Tora die alte Tora Moses verdraengen oder durch Zusaetze erweitern sollte--eine solche Annahme ist von vornherein durch den feststehenden Glaubensatz ausgeschlossen, dasz die Tora Moses, wie sie seit Ewigkeit gegeben sei, so dasz niemand das Recht habe, ihr etwas hinzufuegen oder von khr etwas wegzundhmen. Nein, die neue Tora des Messias wird die alte Tora sein; aber der Messias wird die alte Tora in neuer Weise auslegen. . . . So wird die alte Tora wie eine neue Tora erscheinen u. dies in dem Masze, dasz Gott selbst sie mit seiner Autoritaet wird decken muessen.

[17]Maurer, p. 8: "In kommenden Messiaszeitalter wird das Gesetz nicht abgetan, sondern erst recht studiert und beachtet werden." Cf. Moore, 1, 271.

would cease in Messianic times it would only be because the earth would be full of the knowledge of God.[18]

Davies finds some evidence that there was expectation of minor modification to the Torah in the Messianic Age. However, that would occur within the content of the existing Torah. "There were some Halakoth which would cease to be applicable in that Age; others, by contrast, would acquire a new relevance."[19] Some Rabbis were convinced that the Messianic Age would bring the complete explication of the Torah and the clarification of its obscurities.[20] All Israel would then learn and not forget the Torah.[21]

## Paul Goes Beyond Jewish Expectations: Christ is the New Torah Personified

### Paul's teaching on law not dependent on rabbinic formulations at central point of Paul's concern

Davies confesses that there is little evidence for any new Messianic Torah. He hinges his argument largely on the plea "that the New Testament be allowed to illumine the Messianic hope of Judaism."[22] Davies

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[18]Solomon Schechter, Aspects of Rabbinic Theology (New York: Schocken Books, c.1909, 1961), p. 123, n. 5.

[19]Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age, VII, 66. Note pp. 59-66.

[20]Ibid., VII, 68, 84.

[21]Moore, III, 85.

[22]Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age, VII, 90. Note the conclusions of E. Baemmel, "Nomos Christou," Studia Evangelica, III, Texte und Untersuchungen, edited by F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, c.1964), p. 123, who believes that the rabbinic "law of Messiah" quotations are late and contain only an intensification, reformation, and glorification

refers to the accurate evaluation of Morton Smith that, for the New Testament writers, Jesus occupied the place that God or the law held in the minds of the authors of the Talmudic literature.[23] But that does not validate the claim that Judaism expected a new Torah. Nor does it prove that, when the church claimed for Jesus what Judaism claimed for the law, the church looked to Jesus as the giver of new laws (halakoth). There is no concrete indication in Jewish teaching that in the Messianic Age a new law would replace the old, a teaching which could be claimed as having influenced Paul.[24]

Davies himself concludes that the personification of Torah in Christ goes beyond anything anticipated in Jewish writings. The early church saw that any expectations of Judaism for a new Torah that were fulfilled in Jesus Christ were also transcended in him.[25] That Christ

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of the Torah: "The New Torah of rabbinic sources thus proves to be a variant of the other which deals with an original justice and its re-establishment in the future, indeed as the more moderate form which is concerned only with the elucidation and interpretation of the existing Torah." Again, p. 124: "Finally, the complicated argumentation of Gal. 2:17ff.: The Torah is only a revocable testament, with which Paul wishes to limit the validity of the Mosaic Law, shows more clearly that he could not avail himself of the conception according to which the law was either to be replaced in the Messianic age or supplemented by the Messiah."

[23]Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age, VII, 92.

[24]Note the discussion in Paul Demann, "Moses und das Gesetz bei Paulus," Moses in Schrift und Ueberlieferung (Duesseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1963), p. 230, where he concludes that "Nichts beweist von seiten der allgemeinen rabbinischen Lehr, dasz die Vorstellung einer Thora, die im messianischen Zeitalter die alte ersetzen werde, im zeitgenoessischen Judentum eine gewisse Rolle gespielt hat und also haette Paulus beeinflussen koennon."

[25]Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age, VII, 93.

took the place of the law for Paul does not demand the conclusion that for Paul Christ has the character of a new law corresponding to the old Torah. Paul wants to show the relationship between the law and Christ, as will be indicated in the next chapters. But Paul does not purpose to describe Christ as a giver of laws. He does not write any letter to treat the theme of the law. Paul does not discuss the law in isolation from Christ.[26] He considers the law only in its relation to Christ, only to clarify how faith responds to God in Christ.

Paul identifies Christ with wisdom to call for obedience to Christ, not to a Torah

Judaism equated Torah with Wisdom.[27] The clear identification made in the intertestamental literature was continued in rabbinic writings.[28] Torah was the embodiment of Wisdom; Wisdom is defined in terms of Law.[29] Paul seems to draw on this traditional identification

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[26]Cf. Demann, p. 261, "Man findet in den Briefen keinen Hinweist auf eine Vorstellung oder ein literarishches Thema: Christus--neue Thora. Uebrigens fuehrt Davies selbst keinen an. Wir moechten hinzufuegen, dasz seine Ueberlegung den Gedanken des Paulus verkehrt aufzufassen scheint und dasz in Wirklichkeit eine solche Idee bei Paulus kaum begreiflich ist, der ja niemals Christus in Abhaengigkeit vom Gesetz, sondern immer das Gesetz in Abhaengigkeit von Christus definiert."

[27]Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age, VII, 93.

[28]See Moore, I, 263-269.

[29]See M. Jack Suggs, "'The Word Is Near You': Romans 10:6-10 Within The Purpose Of The Letter," Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox, edited by W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr (Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 304, 307.

of Torah with Wisdom, when, in 1 Cor. 1:24,30, he points to Christ as the wisdom of God. In view of the Jewish Law-Wisdom identification, it is natural to assume that here Paul is also comparing Christ with Torah. Where once Torah was the embodiment of Wisdom, now Christ is the new embodiment of Wisdom, the "New Torah."[30] Then "the law of Christ" would refer to the substitution of Christ for the Torah as the Wisdom of God. But to the extent that Paul thinks of Christ as the "New Torah," he does not do so in order to depict Christ as the giver of new laws, of new halakoth.

In the first letter to Corinth, the letter in which Paul's ennomos Christou occurs, Paul identifies Christ with Wisdom because sophia had evidently become the watchword of Paul's opponents in Corinth. Paul's extensive use of sophia and sophos in 1 Corinthians, compared to his limited employment of the term elsewhere, points to what the discussion in this letter makes clear. Paul calls attention to Christ as the true wisdom of God, in answer to the contentions of the "spiritually wise" in Corinth and the terminology they were using.[31] Paul attempted to call the Corinthians to see the Wisdom of God in the cross of Christ, to move from self-confidence to faith in Christ, crucified, and risen. Therefore Paul does not identify Christ as the Wisdom of God

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[30]Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 172.

[31]Ulrich Wilckens, "Sophia," Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1964), VII, 520-523.

in order to talk about the way in which the commandments of the Law are henceforth proclaimed, but to produce obedience to Christ.

It can be seen that Paul is not concentrating on Christ as the new giver of laws, but as the one who has replaced the Torah. M. Jack Suggs has demonstrated another instance in which Paul employs the Jewish Wisdom-Torah identification in order to reinforce the gospel of Christ.[32] By examining Baruch 3:9-4:4, Suggs shows that Paul's interpretation of Deut. 30:11-14 is dependent on Jewish Wisdom tradition. Baruch identifies Wisdom with Torah in order to affirm that through the Torah as instrument "the word is near you."[33] In Rom. 10:6-10 Paul builds on such Wisdom tradition to call for faith in Christ as the route to the righteousness of the Torah.[34] Suggs describes Paul's procedure as follows:

> In Rom. 10:6-10 Paul has taken up the familiar identification of Wisdom and Torah and added a third term: Jesus Christ. The tension between Gospel and Law is resolved by the identification of Christ with Wisdom-Torah. The apostle hopes in this way to rescue his gospel from the stigma of absolute opposition to the law, while fully preserving the freedom of his own churches. To obey Christ in faith is to obey the law in truth.[35]

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[32]Suggs, pp. 289-312.

[33]Ibid., p. 309.

[34]See the discussion of Romans 10 in Chapter III below under "Christ is the goal of the law."

[35]Suggs, p. 311. Compare also the discussion referred to in the Introduction concerning obedience and faith in Romans by Hans-Werner Bartsch.

If this analysis is correct, it is another indication that Paul employs the Christ=Wisdom=Torah comparison to call for the obedience of faith. Paul is not attempting to show how the old Torah is now being revealed or presented. He is calling for faith in the One who has been now revealed. Paul's teaching about the law does not betray the Jewish interest in the Messiah as an interpreter of the Torah. That Paul may be said to see Christ as the personification of the Torah does not provide a basis for seeing in "the law of Christ" a reference to Christ as the giver of new Torah.[36]

## The "Law of Christ" Not a Reference to Words of Jesus

Writing in The Bible and the Greeks, published in 1935, C. H. Dodd described the "law of the Spirit" of Rom. 8:2 as follows:

> It is rather an immanent principle of life, like the Stoic Law of Nature but determined by the Spirit of Christ. If this is so, then it is possible that ho nomos tou Christou (Gal. vi. 2) is not the Torah of

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[36]Compare Heinrich Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, in Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar ueber den Neue Testament, (13th revised edition; Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, c.1949, 1965), VII, 272: Allerdings handelt es sich bei nomos tou Christou . . . nicht nur um eine neue Auslegung den Tora, sondern um ein im Prinzip durch Christus erneuertes Gesetz. Denn dieser nomos ist das Gesetz, das Christus selbst uns zugute erfuellt hat, und als solches nun die durch diese Erfuellung prinzipiell erneuerten Menschen anredet. Es ist--mit einem anderen paulinischen Ausdruck--der nomos tou pneumatos tēs zōēs en Christo Iesou, Roem. 8:2; vgl. 2 Kor 3:6, das Gesetz, das im Pneuma Christi fordert. . . . Die Tora des Messias Jesus ist in der Tat eine "Interpretation" des mosaischen Gesetzes. Freilich ist diese Interpretation eine solche mit exousia und nicht wie die der Schriftgelehrten; man kann sagen: eine "Interpretation" durch des Messias Jesus Kreuz, das im Evangelium den Glauben erweckt und so den Anspruch und die Erfuellung des Gesetzes freilegt.

> Jesus, i.e. His teaching conceived as legislation for His Church, but the same nomos tou pneumatos tēs zōēs en Christou Iēsou. And this is, I believe, the true interpretation.[37]

As noted above, Dodd later reversed himself in this matter and, in an article published in 1953, has concluded that the Gal. 6:2 phrase refers to a body of traditional sayings of Jesus.[38]

On dividing Gal. 5:25

One of the arguments which Dodd advances in favor of his understanding of the "law of Christ" depends on dividing Gal. 5:25, a passage which occurs three verses before Gal. 6:2, where the phrase "the law of Christ" occurs. Dodd separates "walk by the Spirit" from "live by the Spirit," asserting that they are distinguishable and that "the former is the consequence of the latter."[39] Then claiming that to "live by the Spirit" refers to "the way to liberty," Dodd determines that Gal. 5:25a is parallel to Rom. 8:2 and that accordingly in Rom. 8:2 nomos refers to a regulative principle and not a code of precepts prompted by the Spirit. By contrast Gal. 5:25b is said by Dodd to relate to "the law of Christ" of Gal. 6:2 in a way that does not exclude the suggestion that "the law of Christ" is a "'law' in some sort analogous to the Torah."[40]

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[37]C. H. Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), p. 37.

[38]Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," p. 148.

[39]Ibid., p. 139.

[40]Ibid., p. 140.

Dodd contends that Rom. 8:2 and Gal. 5:25a are related because in both passages there is the connection of pneuma with zoē, and both fulfill the role of indicating the way to liberty. But zaō is used with a "consequence" meaning in Rom. 8:12-13, where it is connected with sarx, the pneuma antithesis. The use of zaō and zoē in Romans 6 also indicates that "to live" cannot be so neatly separated from "to walk" in the Christian life.

Dodd's assertion of a relation between Gal. 5:25a and Rom. 8:2 does not have the support of a corresponding parallel in Romans 8 to Gal. 5:25b. But the division of Gal. 5:25 also contradicts the very point that Paul is trying to make, namely the unity of "living" and "walking" by the Spirit, that "the life in the Spirit which the Galatians themselves claim to experience (compare 3:2,5), in and of itself lays upon them moral imperatives."[41] Dodd sought to divide Gal. 5:25 in order to free Gal. 6:2 from the context which emphasizes the activity of the Spirit, and, by so doing, to show that "the law of Christ" in Gal. 6:2 is different from Rom. 8:2 and, therefore, might be thought of as "law" similar to that of the Torah.

### Paul Avoids Appealing to Dominical Commands in Corinthians

In another attempt to find that "the law of Christ" refers to sayings which form part of the tradition of the teaching of Jesus,

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[41]Victor Paul Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, c.1968), p. 62.

Dodd finds that in 1 Corinthians "maxims which formed part of the tradition of the sayings of Jesus are treated as if they were in some sort elements of a new Torah."[42] In particular the ho Kurios dietaxen occurring in the same chapter with ennomos Christou points to commands "conceived as in some sort constituent elements in the 'law of Christ.'"[43]

Dodd claims a diatagma is a proper constituent of law, and that it would be unnatural to deny that when in 1 Cor. 9:4 the verb diatassō is used of a command of Christ, that is meant by Paul to be part of the law of Christ indicated in verse 21. The noun diatagma is not used at all by Paul. One would expect it to appear if Paul had in mind an actual collection of commands. And the verb diatassō is used only this once by Paul as a command of Christ. The very instances which Dodd cites of the use of diatassō outside the New Testament could be used to show that the verb is regularly employed for commands applying to individual and specific situations. Dodd links 1 Cor. 9:14 to the command of Jesus recorded in Matt. 10:10. But that Dominical saying does not seem to have the character of an order or an ethical injunction to be obeyed; it seems more like hortatory advice from the one who says "Follow Me." In a footnote, Dodd remarked that when Paul uses diatessein as his own command "the verb may be held to retain its older and weaker sense."[44] Dodd offers no reason for assuming this distinction

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[42]Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," p. 145.

[43]Ibid., p. 146.

[44]Ibid., pp. 141-142.

in Paul's usage. There should be some explanation why Paul does not actually mention diatagmata of Christ in general and repeatedly if by ennomos Christou he is referring to commands of Christ as new law for the church.

Dodd discusses Paul's use of epitassō, which "has perhaps from the outset a more authoritarian tone that diatassein."[45] He admits that when Paul alludes to Christ's prohibition of marital separation in 1 Cor. 7:10-11, Paul uses "the more colourless term parangellein," yet still implies that Paul here appeals to an epitagē Kuriou. Actually in 1 and 2 Corinthians Paul only uses epitagē of the Lord in the negative. Once he asserts that he has no command. Twice he states that he is not speaking by epitagē. This may be explained as being part of Paul's counter-attack on his opponents in Corinth.[46] Paul can speak positively of the law in writing to Corinth, but he nullifies his opponents' point of view by refusing to appeal legalistically to an authoritative command. Despite the use of the more colourless term parangellō, 1 Cor. 7:10 seems to be the exception for Paul. That is not his usual procedure.

## Commands of Christ in the Context of Gal. 6:2

Dodd notes that in Gal. 6:2 "the phrase is embedded in a series of moral injunctions forming part of what is called the 'ethical section'

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[45] Ibid., p. 142.

[46] Note the discussion above in Chapter I.

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF

of the epistle."[47] He claims that Paul implies that when a man obeys these injunctions he will be fulfilling the law of Christ. "To this extent at least, it would seem, the law of Christ is such that it can be stated in a form of a code of precepts to which a Christian man is obliged to conform."[48] Dodd then compares this passage to 1 Cor. 9:20. Here it seems that Dodd may be importing his understanding of 1 Corinthians 9 into Galatians 6. He is aware of the emphasis of the Spirit in the context of Gal. 6:2; but, as indicated above, he attempts to rescue Gal. 6:2 from being interpreted in the light of Rom. 8:2 by dividing Gal. 5:25. We also find in the context of Gal. 6:2 Paul's assertion, "the whole law is fulfilled in that one word: Love your neighbor as yourself." This seems to relate closely to 6:2, where bearing the burden of one's neighbor is associated with fulfilling the law of Christ.

Paul does not make substantial use of any collection of the sayings of Jesus as new law.

An assumption underlying Dodd's thesis is that there existed a body of traditional sayings by Jesus which could be treated as elements of a new Torah. The opinion that there was a collection of authoritative sayings of Jesus, an opinion first outlined in detail by Resch,[49] has been

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[47] Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," pp. 137-138.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Alfred Resch, Der Paulinismus und die Logia Jesu (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrischs-sche Buchhandling, 1904).

espoused recently, especially by Davies[50] and Gerhardsson.[51] Without here detailing all the difficulties entailed with this opinion,[52] there are a few points to be made against the view, particularly in light of the use of the same in the work of Gerhardsson and Dodd.

Paul feels bound to certain words of Jesus because they are from the Lord; he does appeal to these.[53] At the same time, there are no direct quotations in the letters of Paul[54]; and the actual references to "commands" or supposed sayings of the Lord are few.[55] It remains to be demonstrated that the many parallels in form and content between the known Gospel sayings of Jesus and the exhortations of Paul, for instance in Romans 12 to 14 and 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5, indicate Paul's use of a collection of Jesus' sayings rather than an acquaintance with Old Testament, Jewish and pagan ethical generalities.[56]

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[50]Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 137-144.

[51]Birger Gerhardsson, Memory and Manuscript (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1961), pp. 282-302.

[52]Note the objections of Weiss and Manson discussed by Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, pp. 141-143.

[53]Compare Wolfgang Schrage, Die konkreten Einzelgebote in der paulinischen Paraenese (Gerd Mohn: Guerterloher Verlagshaus, c.1961), p. 247.

[54]Davies includes the saying attributed to Paul in Acts 20:35, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 140.

[55]Schrage, p. 55.

[56]Harald Riesenfeld, The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., c.1957), pp. 21-23, claims that strict laws relating to holy tradition guaranteed that the words of Jesus were passed down exactly but since they were holy, they were not to be uttered outside the innermost circle of the community; that explains why they are not quoted verbally in Paul. Gerhardsson offers another

Gerhardsson attempts to demonstrate that Paul consciously knew and intentionally employed a transmitted collection of traditional sayings of and about Christ. At the same time he admits that "the concept of tradition in Paul is extremely complicated" and attempts to determine "the various parts within the tradition must be regarded as risky."[57] Gerhardsson describes what he calls the specific "transmission terminology" employed by Paul to designate the Dominical tradition:

> According to Paul, early Christianity has a body of authoritative material which he calls "tradition" (paradosis), 2 Thess. 3.6, and the "traditions" (paradoseis), 1 Cor. 11.2, 2 Thess. 2.15. The delivery of this tradition is indicated by the verb paradidonia, 1 Cor. 11.23, 15.3, its reception by paralambanein 1 Cor. 11.23, 15.1,3, Gal. 1.9, Phil. 4.9, Col. 2.6, 1 Thess. 2.13, 4.1, 2 Thess. 3.6.[58]

The use of such terminology seems to indicate that Paul knew and transmitted traditional teaching. At the same time the evidence by no means suggests extensive dependence on the tradition. Of the passages which Gerhardsson lists, only three use the noun paradosis. The two passages from 2 Thessalonians refer to the teaching which Paul imparted, though these do not necessarily indicate that the message originated with him. Yet he does not suggest any authority for that teaching other than his own. One passage (1 Cor. 11:2) contains both the noun, and the verb, paradidōmi. Of the second and third passages in which the verb occurs, the second (1 Cor. 11:23) can be said to reflect the

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explanation. He asserts that the sayings were not considered as sacred word, so that they were readily adapted to varying situations and combined with other commandments, rules, and regulations. He maintains that Paul does not quote a saying in its entirety but "draws from it a short halakic statement (with the interpretation inserted)," a procedure employed by the Rabbis, Gerhardsson, pp. 3-4, 312.

[57] Ibid., p. 294.

[58] Ibid., p. 290.

paradosis occurring earlier in the same chapter. The third (1 Cor. 15:3) contains both the verbs paradidōmi and paralambanō, and the following verses contain what appear to be a credal fromulation of the death and resurrection of Christ.[59] But the emphasis of the chapter is on the gospel of the risen Lord (verses 1-2), and Paul is concerned with much more than merely passing on a tradition. Moreover, verses 3 to 7 do not demand the existence of an oral or written collection of sayings about (or by) Jesus but only the common testimony of the church about the risen Lord.

Of the passages listed by Gerhardsson in which paralambanein occurs only in the two Corinthian chapters discussed above and in 2 Thess. 3:6 does it occur with paradidōmi or paradosis, respectively. The other occurrences reflect the reception of "the gospel" (Gal. 1:9), or the testimony of the person, work, and word of Paul (Phil. 4:9), the teaching associated with coming to faith in Christ Jesus (Col. 2:6), the word which Paul proclaimed as word of God operative in the believers (1 Thess. 2:3), or the exhortation from Paul concerning Christian living (1 Thess. 4:1). None of these require the positing of a dependence by Paul on earlier tradition.

Gerhardsson comments on Paul and his colleagues that "from one point of view everything they said and did was delivery of tradition."[60] Concerning Paul's statement in 2 Thess. 2:15, he adds that "he thus

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[59] Ibid., pp. 299-300.

[60] Ibid., p. 291.

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF

regards all that he is, and all that he does, says or writes as tradition, in the widest meaning of the word."[61] And again, "Paul treats all he says, writes or does for a congregation as a kind of transmission: the passing on of revelation, of the message of joy, of teachings, recommendations and authoritative directions--all from God."[62]

This transmission, the "transmitted Christ," is a corpus containing sayings of and about Christ, "the gospel tradition," which is the content of the actual gospel, "a tradition, in that it is received by the Apostles' disciples and other listeners, for example, by such as can make no claim to have received it from the Lord."[63] Why do we not see the corpus of sayings in Paul passed on precisely and in quotation? In addition to the reason given above,[64] Gerhardsson says,

> At all events, this Christ-tradition seems to occupy a self-evident position as a basis, focus and point of departure for the work of the Apostle Paul. It is evident that he attempts to provide a firm basis in this centre even for what appear to be peripheral rules. But he does not pass on this focal tradition in the epistles. He presupposes it constantly, since it has already been delivered, en protois.[65]

On the one hand, according to Gerhardsson, everything that Paul said and did was tradition, and yet, on the other hand, this tradition is a

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[61] Ibid., p. 293.

[62] Where is the role of the Spirit in all this? Compare 1 Cor. 2:4, 10-16; Rom. 15:16,19; 1 Thess. 1:5.

[63] Gerhardsson, p. 295.

[64] Supra, footnote 56.

[65] Gerhardsson, p. 295.

corpus of sayings of and about Jesus for which we have no visible evidence in Paul, a fact to be explained by one or more conjectures. That Paul was to any extent dependent on a transmitted tradition, in the sense of a corpus of sayings, remains an undemonstrated assumption.

This appears clearly in Gerhardsson's claim that the "ways" of Paul, referred to in 1 Cor. 4:16, seem "to mean an extensive collection of text material, the contents of which are primarily ethical and paraenetic in character."[66] Of the paradosis passages listed by Gerhardsson, 1 Cor. 11:23-25 and 15:3 are the two which would not have originated with Paul. Neither of these are "primarily ethical and paraenetic" in character. The other passages (1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 2:15 and 3:6) contain no indication that Paul was transmitting material other than his own teaching. Of these, 2 Thess. 2:15 is not "primarily ethical and paraenetic."

Evidently it is Gerhardsson's assumption that there existed an extensive collection of Dominical paraenetic sayings previously employed by Paul that leads him to interpret "the law of Christ" as "messianic law." He notes a "mildness" in Paul's "'legislative' activity":

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[66] Ibid., p. 294. Kuemmel believes that "a not inconsiderable part of Q cannot be proved as hortatory but serves an avowed Christological need," and that "rather, Jesus' sayings were collected with the aim of the continuing proclamation of Jesus' preaching of the coming of God's reign and of the Son of Man," Paul Feine, Johannes Behm, and Werner Georg Kuemmel, Introduction to the New Testament (New York & Nashville: Abingdon Press, c.1966), p. 56. More evidence will be required before one can posit a collection of text material of sayings of Jesus which are primarily ethical in character.

> We cannot here go into the question of the fundamental background of Paul's "mildness" in his "legislative" activity. This naturally stems from his basic certainty that the Torah, in its aspect of nomos, has been brought to an end in the Messiah (e.g. Rom. 10,4), and has been replaced by the messianic law (ho nomus tou Christou, Gal. 6:2) . . . .[67]

It ought to be stated instead that Paul proclaims that Christ, not the messianic law, replaced the law.[68] That a "mildness" in Paul's "'legislative' activity" is noticeable ought to bring into question the idea of "messianic law." Gerhardsson evaluates 1 Cor. 9:21 in the same way:

> It is in the midst of this account (1 Cor. 9.21), in which Paul presents a way of life which agrees point by point with transmitted sayings of Jesus or with halakah from the Lord, that we find his statement that he is not without law, but stands under the law of Christ (mē ōn anomos Theou all ennomos Christou). It is very difficult to interpret this otherwise than to mean that Paul accepts the concept of a messianic law (nomos Christou), built on the foundation of, and about, the Lord, i.e. the gospel tradition, to the extent and in the form in which he had received it.[69]

By "gospel tradition" Gerhardsson means the corpus of sayings of and about Christ.[70] This is the "messianic law" which Paul is "under." Is it mere accident that Gerhardsson has translated ennomos Christou with

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[67]Gerhardsson, p. 310.

[68]See below in Chapter III. Gerhardsson calls attention to his dependence on Dodd in this discussion.

[69]Gerhardsson, p. 319. Again Gerhardsson refers to Dodd's "Ennomos Christou" article, and also to Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism.

[70]Gerhardsson, p. 295.

"under the law of Christ," or does he feel that the change from hupo nomon in verse 20 to ennomos (Christou) in verse 21 is without significance?

Objections must be raised against the assumption that Paul considered as authoritative tradition a collection of Jesus' ethical sayings. This is the assumption underlying Dodd's understanding of "the law of Christ." Evidently it is this assumption which induces Dodd to claim that Gal. 6:1 "clearly alludes to regulations for the treatment of offenders in the church which are to be found in Matt. 18:15-17. It is significant that Paul expressly refers these injunctions to the 'law of Christ.'"[71] He also finds that the "pattern of teaching in Rom. 6:17 indicates that there was a body of early Christian catechetical moral instruction of practical precepts for everyday living which was well known by all."[72]

Dodd finds that Paul wanted to quote a specific command when in Rom. 14:14 he mentions the "Lord Jesus" instead of just the "Lord," or "Christ": "The use of the form Kurios Iēsous, however, suggests the intention of referring to the historic Person, as in 1 Thess. 2:15; I Cor. 11:23."[73] But what about 1 Cor. 16:23; 2 Cor. 1:14; 4:14; 11:31; (Eph. 1:15); Phil. 2:19; Col. 3:17; 1 Thess. 3:11; 4:1-2; 2 Thess. 1:7; 2:8? Certainly Phil. 2:19 and Col. 3:17 do not refer to a command of Jesus; and the passages from Thessalonians cannot be said to refer

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[71]Charles H. Dodd, Gospel and Law: The Relation of Faith and Ethics in Early Christianity (New York: Columbia University Press, c.1951), p. 17.

[72]Ibid., pp. 15-16.

[73]Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," p. 144.

exclusively to the historic person. Moreover, it cannot be asserted that Jesus as a historic person played a dominant role in the development of Paul's theology. Between Jesus and Paul had come the cross, resurrection, and coming-into-existence of the church. Paul was interested not only in Jesus, but in Jesus' person and work as ushering in the new aeon for the salvation of the world.[74] One cannot expect, therefore, that Paul would focus on the words of Jesus for paraenesis. That Paul's imperative flowed from his indicative will be discussed below. When Paul calls for obedience to the example of Jesus, the reference is not so much to his earthly existence as to his example of obedience in His preexistence, His becoming incarnate.[75] What Dodd discovers in the writing of Paul as reminiscences of the person and words of the earthly Jesus are too easily identified as Dominical injunctions.[76] Paul does not in fact make substantial use of any collection of the sayings of Jesus that would support a claim to regard "the law of Christ" as the new messianic Torah.

"Obedience" in Paul as compared with Judaism, Qumran, and with later developments in the early church

Evidently it is Dodd's understanding of "the law of Christ as new messianic torah" that leads him to write of "obedience to the law of

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[74]Schrage, p. 239.

[75]Ibid., p. 240.

[76]Dodd's conclusions have been brought into question by others, including George Eldon Ladd, "Paul and the Law," Soli Deo Gloria: New Testament Studies in Honor of William Childs Robinson, edited by J. McDowell Richards (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, c.1968),

God."[77] Dodd is suggesting that Paul has given certain specific commands or injunctions, as in 1 Corinthians 9 and Galatians 6, which commands are to be obeyed as one obeying a new torah. But significantly, Paul avoids speaking of "obedience to the law," and no where suggests that it is something that one "obeys."[78] Paul is opposed to the formalization and externalization of the concept of obedience.

Had Paul understood Christ as the giver of new Torah we would expect to find him calling for obedience to the words of Jesus and quoting them regularly. Yet we have little indication that the words of the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, were in the forefront of his attention.[79] The dominant element in Paul's thinking was the advent of the new aeon.[80] Christ as the new root of obedience, not as the giver

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pp. 145-146, note 60. In an otherwise helpful work, Richard N. Longenecker, Paul, Apostle of Liberty (New York: Harper & Row, c.1964), pp. 183-185, has unfortunately followed Dodd, with notable lapses of logic in his argument.

[77]Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," p. 139. Compare p. 137, "the law of God . . . may be obeyed by one who is no longer subject to Torah" (sic).

[78]See Furnish, pp. 187, 191.

[79]Note Albrecht Oepke, Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater, in Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament (Berlin: Evangelischer Verlagsanstalt, 1957), IX, 148: "Der Nomos Christi ist nicht auf einzelne ueberlieferte Herrenworte zu beschraenken, sondern umfassend als die im neuen Aion geltende und das Teilhaben an ihm sicherende Lebensordnung zu verstehen. Eine schoene Zusammenfassung des nomos Christou steht Rm 15,2f. An die Bergpredigt hat Pls schwerlich gedacht."

[80]See the discussion and references in Martin H. Scharlemann, Stephen: A Singular Saint (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, c.1968), p. 132.

of fresh law to be obeyed, was central in Paul's concern.[81] When Dodd speaks of the ultimate law of God which "can be discerned in the Torah when it is interpreted by Christ," it makes Christ appear to be little more than the messianic clarifier of Judaism or the "right teacher" pesher-giver of Qumran. On the basis of his discussion of the use of nomos in Rom. 7:23, Dodd can speak of one who is no longer subject to Torah obeying the law of God.[82] At this point he seems to understand Rom. 7:14-25 as describing the situation of the Christian life. However, as will be shown below in Chapter IV, Paul is not speaking in Romans 7 of a Christian man who is released from the Torah of Moses looking at the eternal law of God. He describes man under the law unable to be obedient to the law while yet assenting to its claim. When Paul depicts the new situation of the Christian life, he avoids speaking of obedience to the law, and, with a few notable exceptions, avoids even mentioning nomos in those contexts except to point up the contrast. Note in this same chapter of Romans, for instance, how in verse 6 Paul abandons the use of nomos in describing the new situation in the second half of the verse, just as he finds it unnecessary to discuss nomos in chapters 6 and 8 to describe the new situation there. In the first few verses of chapter 8, nomos is mentioned primarily to supply the contrast with chapter 7.[83]

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[81]Herman N. Ridderbos, The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., c.1953), p. 213. See also Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, p. 226, and Furnish, pp. 184-187, 193-197.

[82]Dodd, "Ennomos Christou," p. 137.

[83]This will be discussed further in Chapter III.

That Paul does not call for obedience to the law is paralleled by his description of the Christian as being "in the law of Christ," not "under" the law of Christ, a nuance which Gerhardsson specifically ignores,[84] and which Dodd does not seem to consider worthy of note. Paul's placing ennomos in such close proximity to hupo nomon in 1 Cor. 9:20-21 certainly has the effect of the former cancelling out the latter. That subtle verbal change indicates the manifest change in relationship for the Christian, who is no longer under obedience to the Law but, united with Christ, is now under obligation to Christ as Lord.

The concentration on the content of the law implied in understanding "the law of Christ" as new messianic Torah reflects the understanding of law found in rabbinic Judaism, in Qumran, and in later early Christianity.

In rabbinic Judaism law was understood chiefly as halakah to be studied and obeyed. This in part was the development that kept Judaism from seeing the radical nature of sin as rebellion.[85] The Torah was Israel's means of grace, God's greatest gift to Israel, which when desired and obeyed by the Jew produces life and salvation.[86] The

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[84]Gerhardsson, p. 319.

[85]See Scharlemann, p. 131.

[86]Cf. Baruch 51:7: "Those who have been saved by their works, and to whom the law has been now a hope." Translation from R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), II, 509. We read in Pirke Aboth vi, 7: "Great is Torah for it gives to those that practice it life in this world and in the world to come, as it is said (Prov. IV.22): 'For they are life to those that find them and health to all their flesh.'" Translation from The Ethics of the Talmud: Syings of the Fathers, edited by R. Travers Herford (New York: Schocken Books, c.1945, 1962), pp. 158-159. Cf. the saying attributed to R. Eleazar Modiin (Mek Ex 15,26): "Was

possession of the law justifies and the observance of the law obtains blessings.[87] Salvation or condemnation in the last assize depends on the scale balancing transgressions and acts of fulfilling of the law.[88]

Pharisaism emphasizes the freedom and ability of man to seek, choose, and do what is good, to assume the yoke of the Law and thereby become part of the Kingdom of heaven.[89] Paul emphasizes that the new age has come as a gift. As the gospels proclaim that the Kingdom of God has been given to man, so Paul asserts that the new creation has been given. The law has been fulfilled by Christ, and thus the man in Christ fulfills the law. Obedience to the will of God is called for in response to the salvation already effected, not in order to achieve salvation.

Paul's understanding of the law is seen in reverse in the Qumran writings, where the new age is ushered in as a result of the intense study

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wollen die Worte besagen 'Ich bin Jahweh dein Arzt'? Gott sprache zu Mose: Sage den Israeliten: Die Worte der Tora, die Ich euch gegeben habe, sind Heilung fuer euch, sind Leben fuer euch." Strack-Billerbeck, III, 129.

[87]Wisdom of Solomon, 6:17-21: "The beginning of (wisdom) is the most sincere desire for instruction. And the concern for instruction is love, and love is observance of its (wisdom's) laws, and the keeping of the laws is assurance of immortality. And immortality brings one near to God. The desire for wisdom then leans to sovereignty. Therefore, if you value thrones and sceptres, you rulers of nations, honor wisdom, in order that you may rule for ever." Wisdom 15:1-3, in the context of the entire work, assures one of righteousness by virtue of possession of the law.

[88]Maurer, p. 11.

[89]Hugo Odeberg, Pharisaism and Christianity, translated by J. M. Moe (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1943, 1946), pp. 56, 67,70.

of the law, whereby the way for the Lord would be cleared in the wilderness.[90] The emphasis on the content of the law reflected in understanding Paul's "law of Christ" as new messianic torah is paralleled in the Qumran understanding of the "law-interpreter" as a second Moses whose primary function is that of a teacher and exponent of the Torah; the study of the Torah assumes a messianic significance.[91] Where for Paul salvation is freedom from the law, for Qumran salvation is enabling one to say "Yes!" to the Torah; God rescues man that man might be saved for the Law, and not set free from the Law.[92] Conversion is a return to the Law.[93] Man may have no merit because of his deeds before he receives the gracious salvation upon entry into the community, but after becoming part of the holy community, his good deeds of studying the law day and night and acting accordingly are meritorious.[94] Qumran's emphasis on the Torah is displayed in the concern when receiving the special revealed insight into the meaning of the Law,[95] and in treating

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[90] N. Wieder, "The 'Law-Interpreter' of the Sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls; The Second Moses," Journal of Jewish Studies, IV (1953), 158-175.

[91] Ibid., IV, 175.

[92] See Herbert Braun, "Roemer 7, 7-25 und das Selbstverstaendnis des Qumran-Frommen," Gesammelte Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, c.1962), p. 113, and also p. 116: "Gottes Heilstun befreit bei Paulus von der Tora, entscheidende Helfe darstellt.

[93] Hans Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, Publishers, c.1969), pp. 119, 121.

[94] Braun, p. 112.

[95] Svend Holm-Nielson, Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran (Aarhus, Denmark: Universtetsforlaget I, 1960), p. 287.

the interpretation of the Law on a plane equal to that of the Law itself.[96] New law to be obeyed in a new time, then, was not a unique idea in the time of Paul. Paul had much more to proclaim than a new law of the Messiah. To confine "the law of Christ" primarily to messianic law restricts Paul's understanding of what God had done in the new aeon.

Failure to appreciate the unique message of the New Testament proclamation occurred in later developments of the early church. Some have seen already in Corinth the inception of understanding the words of Jesus as "new law" binding upon Christians.[97] The notion gains strength in the age after Paul.

> The sub-apostolic Church, more timid, less conscious of the inspiration of the Spirit, fell back upon the conception of Christ as another Moses, a lawgiver laying down the commandments for a new righteousness.[98]

Barnabas, for instance, can speak of "the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2:6, which the Lord gave to us as Moses gave the original law, 14:1-4. Describing Christ and proclamation of him as the new law occurs already also in Hermas, Justin Martyr, and frequently thereafter.[99]

When the later church turned Christ into a new lawgiver and the "law of Christ" into his authoritative teaching, it was forced in turn to

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[96]Friedrich Noetscher, Zur theologischen Terminologie der Qumran-Texte (Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlag, c.1956), p. 65.

[97]See Eric H. Wahlstrom, The New Life in Christ (Philadelphia, Pa: Muhlenberg Press, c.1950), p. 166.

[98]C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, A Rabbinic Anthology (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), p. 628.

[99]It is noteworthy that Longenecker supports his understanding of "the law of Christ" as the teaching and example of Christ by citing Justin Martyr. Longnecker, p. 191.

de-emphasize Christ's function of having fulfilled the law. It fell short of Paul's grasp of Christ as the Lord who had ushered in the new aeon.

One of the distinguishing marks of Paul and the New Testament is the call for obedience to the Lord who had effected salvation as the agent of God's new creation, as opposed to the understanding of Judaism, Qumran, and even the later church of obedience to the law, or to the law of the right-teacher, or the law of the Messiah. Dodd's understanding of "the law of Christ" as a reference to commands of Jesus as a law in some way analagous to the Torah, runs the risk then of cancelling that distinction.

One must conclude there is little evidence that Paul conceived of any new messianic Torah consisting of words of Jesus which were to form authoritative new law for the church. Dodd's attempt to divide Gal. 5:25 and to offer Paul's use of diatassō as support for his interpretation of "the law of Christ" must be rejected. Moreover, the assumption that Paul was to any significant extent dependent on a transmitted tradition of Dominical demands remains undemonstrated. Paul does not manifest a utilization of sayings of Jesus which could constitute a new messianic Torah.

Paul describes Christ not as the giver of new law but as the object of faith. He calls for obedience to Christ, not to Christian instruction.

## CHAPTER III

## "THE LAW OF CHRIST" REFERS TO A NEW FACT OF HISTORY: CHRIST HAS FULFILLED AND SO REPLACED THE LAW FOR US

### Christ has Fulfilled and so Replaced the Law

#### The "new aeon" decisive for Paul

The decisive factor in Paul's theology is what has occurred to create the "new aeon." Paul proclaims an entirely changed situation. He thinks in terms of then and now, of what is essentially old and what is definitely new. Paul operates with the radical antithesis between the old covenant and the new covenant now ratified by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We see this contrast in the antithesis of gramma and pneuma in Paul's second letter to Corinthians (3:3-5), the former representing the historically limited Old Testament revelation and the latter the eschatological gift of Christ.[1] In this context, Paul views the "law" less as a teaching than as a past event which has now been superseded.[2]

Paul's concern then is to proclaim the advent of the new aeon and the gift of God in Christ which has been granted for the salvation of

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[1]Wolfgang Schrage, Die konkreten Einzelgebote in der paulinischen Paraenese (Gerd Mohn: Guetersloher Verlagshaus, c.1961), p. 77.

[2]Gerhard Ebeling, "Erwaegungen zur Lehre vom Gesetz," Zeitschrift fuer Theologie und Kirche, LV (1958), 303.

mankind. Paul is not merely attempting to help people obey the law of God or to avoid the pitfalls of legalism. He is appealing for men to come to faith in Jesus Christ as their crucified and risen Lord. In the words of the Jewish author, L. Baeck:

> Now it is clear why Paul fought, not against "law," but against the "present" validity of the law; and fought the fight with all the determination of his faith and his will. Not the "law" as such but the Messiah, his presence, his actuality, were at stake. Paul's whole religion was involved in this fight. If by God's decree, full redemption was, in fact, allotted to Paul and the community of the faithful, it followed that the law had ceased rightly to subsist. Were it still to be in force, then the gospel of the fulfillment, of the consummation was denied . . . . Either "law" or "redemption," this was the question. We are, therefore, not entitled to say that Paul rejected or condemned the law--if he had done so he would have broken asunder the structure of his belief.[3]

Paul's religion was faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Paul is not concerned to promote a new law. He is not attempting to demonstrate a difference between a law which has expired and a law which remains. He is showing the contrast between that law which ultimately enslaves, which was temporary, and the "law of Christ" which designates the action of the covenant God in the new aeon, the mark of which is the current activity of the Spirit.

The Christ who has ushered in the new aeon did not arrive to bring a rational clarification of the commands of the Mosaic law. Jesus was not a messiah who appeared merely to give the power to follow the rules of the law, which beforehand were beyond the grasp of man. Nor did he

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[3]L. Baeck, "The Faith of Paul," Journal of Jewish Studies, III (1952), 106-107.

come to give other rules, but to give himself in fulfillment of the demand and promise of the law, as shall be noted below.[4] Had Paul thought of Jesus as a messiah come to enlighten men concerning the law or to provide for them new impetus to fulfill the law, one would expect to find a detailed exposition of this law or of a new law in Paul's writings, as well as frequent appeals to perform the same. But Paul seldom appeals to the law, and then not as a standard of conduct for Christians.[5]

The context in which Paul's phrase "the law of Christ" occurs is a case in point. To avoid the danger (or the charge) of libertinism Paul directs the Galatians to the practice of loving service. Instead of pointing to the precepts of the law, Paul calls upon the Galatians

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[4]Paul Althus, "Gebot und Gesetz," Gesetz und Evangelium, edited by Ernst Kinder and Klaus Haendler (Darmstadt: Wissenschlaftliche Buchgesellschaft, c.1968), p. 203. Althaus notes that in the "ethical" chapter of Romans, chapter 12, and the following chapters, the law does not come to the fore, with the exception of the law of love as the essence of the law (13:8-10). Moreover, the law is not discussed in the Thessalonian correspondence nor in 1 Corinthians. Paul speaks instead of the "will of God," as Jesus spoke of "the will of My Father." Note the presentation of this matter below in Chapter V also.

[5]Cf. Eric H. Walstrom, The New Life in Christ (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1950), p. 137, who, however, goes too far when he asserts that Paul "never even directed his people to learn from the law what moral conduct should be" (p. 138). See below in Chapter V where it is pointed out that when Christian freedom was not at stake in his letters that the law, understood especially as the written Torah, was written for Christian admonition. Wahlstrom adds the noteworthy view of Juncker that "it is extremely peculiar that when the apostle writes to the young Christians that he does not cite the ancient and holy code in which the will of God had been revealed. . . . Paul used the law in a very few instances to support his own advice, but he did not use it as a standard" (p. 138).

to fulfill the law of Christ. Christ is Paul's criterion. The Spirit of Christ will enable them to produce fruit which will show freedom at work in acts of love. That is what is happening in the new situation, in the "new creation" (6:15). In the new aeon the Spirit of Christ comes to enable the Galatians to work what is good for all (6:10). Now is the time when the promise of God is operative (Gal. 3:14). If the law affects the promise at all, it annuls it (3:18). Christ did not come to tidy up the law or to show how to fulfill it. To revert to the law produces the results of the flesh (5:18-19).

Righteousness belongs to what has happened in the new aeon, to Christ. To understand that for Paul righteousness is a gift of the new aeon is decisive for comprehending his view of the fulfillment of the law.[6] In Christ righteousness is a free gift apart from the law. The law can be appreciated and accomplished only by being in Christ, "in the law of Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21).

Paul is proclaiming the power of the new situation in Christ. He is not showing the way to a better performance of the commandments. Nor is he warning only against attempting to be justified by works of the law (Gal. 2:16), what Burton describes as the law interpreted legalistically.[7] Paul considers commending Christ more important than commenting on the law. He discusses the Mosaic law in antithesis to the law of

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[6]Cf. Ragnar Bring, Christus und das Gesetz (Leiden: E. J. Brill, c.1969), p. 24.

[7]See the discussion of Burton in the first chapter above, and also below, in connection with the "law of love."

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW O

Christ, in connection with the gospel. Paul is interested in having people recognize the "law of sin" (Rom. 7:23; 8:2); that is, how through the flesh sin manipulates the law. He has a less pronounced concern for people to think about the role of the law of Moses.[8] As indicated in the introductory chapter, this can be seen by the fact that Paul feels little need to discuss the role of the law when writing to congregations where there was evidently no confrontation with Jews or Judaizers.

Paul's criterion is what God has done in the new aeon. He desires to proclaim the gospel of the risen Christ as the power for salvation through faith (Rom. 1:15-16). One can only understand Paul's thinking on the law if he is willing to go with Paul on the road to Damascus. That experience was the source of Paul's new theological orientation (Gal. 1:11-12). It also explains his teaching on the law. Paul looks at all his previous knowledge and experience in the light of his faith in the risen Christ. From the vantage point of that insight into new aeon he discusses Mosaic law and the Old Testament. His life could be conceived of only in terms of being "in Christ," whether life at the present (Gal. 2:20), or in the past (Phil. 3:3-7), Paul's Damascus experience led him to believe that what he had counted as of value was replaced by Christ. Paul could still agree with the rabbinic estimation of the law

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[8]Peter Gottview Verweijs, Evangelium und Neues Gesetz in der Aeltesten Christenheit bis auf Marcion (Utrecht-Holland: Drukkerij Em Uitgeverij V/H Kemink En Zoon N. V. Domplein, 1960), p. 63.

as good.[9] But he no longer viewed the Torah as that which could guarantee for him the gift of life. Now he saw the radical nature of sin as hostility against God. It had manifested itself that way in his own past activity (1 Cor. 15:9), as he now understood.

It was not that Paul was dissatisfied with the law. He had enthusiastically pursued the righteousness of the law, evidently on the basis of an assumption that man is capable of fulfilling it himself. Something happened to transform the rabbi into an apostle. He discovered in Christ the difference between righteousness pursued and righteousness given by grace. He discovered the God who had, after all, always acted on the basis of promise. This was revealed for Paul through the event of the new aeon, in which righteousness is given to Jew and Gentile alike through Christ as Lord.

The demand of the law fulfilled by Christ

Christ, the new revelation of God, is the decisive criterion for Paul. But the coming of Christ does not remove the fact that God had manifested Himself in the Mosaic law. Therefore, especially when called upon to talk about the law, Paul relates the law to Christ. He sees a connection between the law and Christ. He sees the same God at work, in promise and fulfillment. Paul knew not only his own attempts to fulfill the law, but also the longing of Judaism for the full realization of the

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[9] Walter Grundmann, "Gesetz, Rechtfertigung und Mystik bei Paulus," Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, XX (January 1933), 55.

promise contained in the law.[10] But Paul now knew that hope for fulfillment of the law's promise was realizeable, not through performance of works of the law, but only through the work of Christ.

The law demands complete obedience. Jew and Gentile alike had fallen under the death warrant issued by the law's demand (Rom. 3:9-19; Gal. 3:22). The solution to this dilemma is found in the redemption effected through Christ (Rom. 3:24-26), through his death and resurrection (Rom. 4:24-25). Christ's obedience (Rom. 5:19), to the point of death (Phil. 2:7), has obtained release from the sentence of the law for those joined to Christ (Rom. 8:34; Col. 1:22). In the cross of Christ "the law's sentence of condemnation on sin reached its fulfillment"[11] (Gal. 3:13). Sin no longer has dominion over the man who has died and risen with Christ (Rom. 6:6-9). By the act of Christ the law's demand (Rom. 8:4)[12] becomes fulfilled. Through faith in Christ's work one can say that now for the first time the law has been confirmed (Rom. 3:31).

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[10]See the extensive references for the longing of Judaism in Richard N. Longenecker, Paul, Apostle of Liberty (New York: Harper and Row, c.1964), p. 84.

[11]W. Gutbrod, "nomos," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1967), IV, 1076.

[12]Verweijs, p. 77, claims that the singular form indicates the law in its oneness, not requirements, as in Rom. 2:26. Cf. Rom. 1:32; a homogeneous will of God, a divine right order recognizeable by the heathen, not a set of commandments. Therefore the fulfillment of Rom. 8:4 is a permanent fulfilling which occurs in the Christian.

Christ is the goal of the law, having fulfilled its promise

In his letter to the Romans (10:4), Paul writes that telos gar nomou Christos eis dikaiosunēn panti tō pisteuonti. The word telos in this passage has been variously interpreted. Not all of the arguments for understanding telos as either "end" or "goal" will be presented here. Apart from the precise interpretation of this passage, there is validity in both translations as presenting part of Paul's teaching about the law in relation to Christ. Each translation will be employed, in this section of the paper and the next, to describe Paul's teaching.

The primary intention of telos in Rom. 10:4 is "goal."[13] Felix Flueckiger claims that, linguistically, any interpretation should begin with the meaning of "goal."[14] Profane Greek would employ teleute for the temporal sense, whereas telos would have the meaning of "goal" or end in the sense of an accomplished goal, the fulfilling or completion. According to Flueckiger, the reason that this distinction is not pushed in the Septuagint and New Testament Greek is because "time" in biblical thought is understood theologically. Flueckiger claims that in those places in Biblical Greek where telos could be translated with "end" the original meaning of "goal" still accords. A purely temporal meaning for

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[13]Thus A. J. Bandstra, The Law and the Elements of the World: An Exegetical Study in Aspects of Paul's Teaching (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), pp. 104-105.

[14]Felix Fluekiger, "Christus des Gesetzes telos," Theologische Zeitschrift (Basel), XI (1955), 153-157.

Rom. 10:4, as though telos indicated simply the end of the time of the law's value, can hardly be a correct translation.[15]

The meaning "goal" is a better interpretation of telos. The problem presented by Paul is this: even though the Jews pursued the law, they did not attain its righteousness. They pursued the law's promise of righteousness as though it were to be attained on the basis of performance (9:31-32). The Jews failed to gain the insight that righteousness is granted only to faith. They missed hearing the law proclaim sin, not righteousness, to be the result of attempting to stand on one's works (3:20). The attempt to establish one's own righteousness is a refusal to recognize that righteousness comes from God (10:3). The rejection of that gift is seen in taking offence at Christ (9:33). The law was intended to give righteousness, but the righteousness of God, granted to faith (9:32).

What the law required has now been fulfilled in Christ (8:3). Christ did not come to do away with the righteousness of the law, but personally to fulfill it. Men united by faith in Him share in His righteousness and fulfill the law in Him. Judgment is removed from those who are in Christ (8:1), because the purpose of the law to condemn sin has been completed in its judgment against Christ.

The purpose of the law is realized through Christ. Christ by His obedience achieved what the law was unable to do for men, namely to grant the righteousness of God to men. Thus it is that the life intended by the commandment is given to men (7:14). So Christ has effected the goal

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[15] Ibid., XI, 153-154.

of the law and has become telos nomou.[16] The law aimed at righteousness, and this righteousness has now become a reality through Christ, in that He gives righteousness to everyone who believes in Him.

In chapters 9 (31-33) and 10 (2-4) Paul asks why Israel, which had the law that demanded righteousness and strove to fulfill it, did not attain what was promised. He answers by elucidating what was ignored. The righteousness of God can be received only on His terms. The attempt to establish one's own righteousness fails (10:3). The words of Moses in verse 5 should not be interpreted to point to a demand for following the legal prescriptions of the law or a demand for performance of its works. In that case Paul would be quoting Moses against his own argument. He would be pleading for the same righteousness of the law for which the Israelites ignorantly strove.[17] Paul adduces the authority of Mosaic law (Deut. 9:4; 30:12-14) in verses 5 through 8 to support his contention that God's word for men is a word that calls for faith and not performance of works, as a means of attaining righteousness. The "doing" of which Moses speaks, that which leads to life, is the fulfillment found through faith in Christ. Now without the law, through faith, the Gentiles have that for which the Jews strove on the basis of performance of the demands of the law (3:21; 9:15,30).

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[16]Cf. the excellent presentation in the second chapter of the work by Bring cited above, "Die Gerechtigkeit Gottes und das allttestamentliche Gesetz.--Eine Untersuchung von Roem. 10:4," pp. 35-72.

[17]Ibid., p. 51.

The translation of telos as "goal" best represents the context. It does justice to the "pursuit" picture (9:30-31). Here Paul is not denying the validity of Mosaic law but cites it in positive terms as evidence for his argument. Instead he is indicting the Jews, whose false understanding of the law is refuted through the law. Their explication and application of the law missed its essential revelation. Now the goal of the law is present in the proclaimed word of faith. By confession of word and heart the law of Moses is fulfilled. The goal of that law is Christ, through whom is given righteousness and salvation (10:8-10). The righteousness demanded by the law becomes a reality; and, in this sense, Christ is the goal of the law; all who believe on Him obtain righteousness. Christ is the goal of the law, because what the law proffered reaches its fulfillment in Him.

This understanding throws light on the interpretation of Paul's employment of the phrase "the law of Christ." Paul had no desire to minimize the worth of the Mosaic law. But the law was the first stage. It has its completion only in Christ. The law is good, having value now in Christ. In Christ the law is not denied, but established (Rom. 3:31). Christ is by no means the end of the law in the sense that God's law, its demand and its fulfillment in works, has ceased.[18] The law, intended to bring life, comes to its realization now in Christ. Christians, therefore, are called to "the law of Christ," to seek its fulfillment in

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[18] Heinrich Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, in Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar ueber den Neue Testament, begruendet von Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer (13th revised edition; Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, c.1949, 1965), VII, 272.

their lives. As the promise of the law has been fulfilled in the saving work of Christ, Christians have attained to a fulfilled law through faith in Christ. Paul can say that the whole law is fulfilled in one word (Gal. 5:13). This does not mean a reversion to a command to attempt to fulfill the law on the basis of one's own works. It signifies the salvation of the new aeon effected by Christ. That has brought the life promised in the law. The goal of the law is fulfilled in Christ.

Having replaced it, Christ is the end of the law

The law as the revelation of God's promises and righteous demands finds it fulfillment, its completion, in Christ. But to say that Christ is the outcome of the law, is to imply at the same time that he is the termination of the law. The law has come to an end, because its demand and promise have been subsumed under Christ, who has himself replaced it in God's plan for the healing of mankind. The righteousness of God, promised in the law, is not granted in Christ. One can only speak of the law coming to an end in the sense that God, according to His marvelous mystery, planned that His Son should replace the law as a way of salvation. Christ is the end of the law in that through him the old has been eclipsed by the new. Christ's work is a testimony both to the validity of the law and to its cessation.[19] In the new aeon the old law has come to an end because its promise has been fulfilled in Christ. The promise made to Abraham has been realized in the faithfulness of Christ (Rom. 1:7; 4:2-4;

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[19]Bandstra, p. 105.

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF

3:22).[20] Because the fulfillment of the law is realized only in Christ, Christ is the end of the law for Christians. They have died to the law (Rom. 7:4-6). In them the requirement of the law is fulfilled as they live in the Spirit of Christ (8:4,9,10).

As a Jew Paul had seen the Mosaic law as the greatest gift of God, the source of righteousness and the highest expression of God's will and love. But since Damascus the greatest of all gifts was Christ. The same God had given both the law and Christ, but the gift of Christ was so unlike all previous actions of God that the thought of comparison was beyond question. Paul's acceptance of Jesus Christ "provided a new insight into that new eschatological situation into which men had been placed by the crucifixion and the resurrection."[21] Because of his conviction that God had done a new thing Paul could look back from the vantage point of the new aeon and "conclude that the law of Moses played only a temporary role in God's plan of salvation."[22]

Where salvation had been for the people of the law, now it is for all in Christ. The law had ceased to be the measure of God's will for

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[20]According to Longenecker, p. 148, the term pisteōs Iesou Christou, Rom. 3:22 (cf. Gal. 2:16; 3:22; Phil. 3:9), should be translated "the faithfulness of Jesus Christ." By His act and life of faithfulness Christ abrogated both the curse of the law and the contractural obligation between God and man. He adds, p. 152: "it is because in His sacrifice He redeemed from the curse of the law and in His perfect obedience He fulfilled the obligations of the Law that Paul can say, 'Christ is the end of the law in its connection with righteousness.'"

[21]Martin H. Scharlemann, Stephen: A Singular Saint (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, c.1968), p. 132.

[22]Ibid.

Jew and Gentile alike. Paul came to see "law" and "Christ" as opposites. There was no possibility of using the law to establish one's own righteousness. Doing the law is the antithesis of faith (Gal. 3:12). Righteousness from God does not come on the basis of performance; it is given to those who believe in Christ (Gal. 2:16). Paul is determined to oppose Jewish and Judaistic salvation theology. The law had been determinative for the Jews. But that law is at an end for Christians. Paul makes that clear when speaking of himself. Not only are Gentiles not to be led under the law, but he himself, formerly under the law, is no longer under the law. He is not "in the law" but he is "in Christ." Christ has replaced the law for the man in Christ. It's not that the law has changed, but that the situation has changed for Paul. In the new aeon, he is under new lordship. In fulfilling the hope of the law, Christ has replaced both its promise and its demand.[23]

## Christ Has Fulfilled and Replaced the Law for Men

### When the Gospel of Christ comes the law is taken seriously

According to Paul, when the good news of faith in Jesus Christ comes the law is first upheld (Rom. 3:31). The end of the law's domination is determined on the basis of the coming of the new aeon and the disclosure of God's righteousness given in Christ to the eyes of faith. According to Hans Conzelmann,

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[23]For further discussion of the various arguments for understanding telos in Rom. 10:4 as either "goal" or "end" see the description and references in Bandstra, pp. 101-106.

> The gospel is not complicated, but my position is; it is therefore difficult to describe it in abstract terms. Paul sets out to show not only <u>that</u> man's situation is hidden from him, but also <u>how</u> this is so: that he believes that he can do God service on the basis of fulfilling of the law. Now the web is untangled . . . . At the moment that my situation is disclosed through the gospel, I know that I am--and always have been--dominated by the law, and recognize that this is not the position that God intends.[24]

Only through the gospel does one appreciate the God-given function of the law to establish that all fall short of the glory of God. Only the gospel can show that Christ, by fulfilling the law, upholds the law as the good and gracious will of God. It is first possible in Christ to recognize the unconditional judgment of the law and thus to take it seriously. Attempting to find room and scope under the law for one's sin in the process of using it for self-justification removes the sharpness of the law and in fact distorts it. When Paul says anything about the law, it is the context of his proclamation of the gospel.[25] Especially in letters addressed to situations of Jewish-Christian controversy, Paul writes of the law in terms of its contribution to the explanation of the gospel.[26] Paul includes statements about the law in the middle of explications of the gospel.[27]

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[24]Hanz Conzelmann, <u>An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament</u> (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers, c.1969), p. 228.

[25]One can glance for instance at Gal. 2:16-21; 3:11-14; 4:4-7; Rom. 3:20-21; 7:6,25-8:4; 1 Cor. 9:20-21; Phil. 3:9-10.

[26]Cf. Conzelmann, pp. 221, 227.

[27]Rom. 5:20; 6:14-15; Gal. 5:14,23; 6:2; 1 Cor. 15:56.

This indicates that for Paul it is important to understand the role of the law. The law is a valid revelation of God. This can be appreciated by the man who is "In the law of Christ." The "law of Christ" designates the focus of the man to whom the new aeon has been revealed. The "law" in the phrase is the original law of God, the Mosaic law known to Paul as holy and spiritual. In Christ this law is established, not denied. It is not that God's law or the fulfilling of His demands have ceased, but that in Christ God's law is so established that His intention for men to have life, voiced in the law, is realized.[28] The phrase "the law of Christ" is a way of asserting that, because of the good news of Christ, we can consider and understand the role of the Mosaic law.

The righteousness of the law appropriated by faith in Christ

When is the law properly understood? When one recognizes that God never intended man to pursue righteousness on the basis of performing works of law. According to Paul, the task of the law is to show just the opposite (Galatians 3; Romans 4). There never was a period in history when righteousness was granted on the basis of performance rather than on the basis of faith. H. J. Schoeps attempts to describe Paul's understanding of God's relationship with man on the basis of faith by contrast with the Jewish point of view.

> In consequence, the final result of all the intertwined thoughts of the apostle in respect of the law is this: the old type of relation with the divine mediated by the

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[28] Cf. Schrage, p. 99, and Schlier, VII, 272.

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF CH

> law which brings the Jew face to face with God and is realized in the fulfilling of commands, is now superseded--to speak in Hegelian terms--by the new situation "in Christ," by a new and more intimate relationship which enables man to share in the divine nature through the Incarnate Son. The new principle on which this participation rests is faith, which has annulled for Christians the old principle of the law that bound the Jew to his God.
>
> Only in this sense can Paul speak of a nomos Christou (Gal. 6:2), of the love which constrains Christians to carry each others burdens, or of a nomos pisteōs (Rom. 3:27). He implies that faith is the true content of the law (nomon histanomen, 3:27).[29]

Schoeps is accurate in assigning to Paul the conviction that it is faith by which the man "in Christ" is bound to his God. But Paul would say that the righteousness of God revealed in the law is appropriated by man according to promise. According to Paul, his kinsmen had attempted to establish their own righteousness (Rom. 10:3), taking offense at Him who was the goal of the law.

Schoeps correctly shows how Paul "implies that faith is the true content of the law." It is faith in Christ through which the goal of the law, the righteousness of God, is appropriated. So faith does not attempt to overthrow the law, but instead brings the law to its full value. The way to God's declaration of righteousness is not through a pursuit of self-justification on the basis of performance of the works of the law. To attempt to build on the works of the law is to be bound to the old aeon, to ignore what God has done in the new. Whatever is not from faith in Christ is sin (Rom. 14:23). The righteousness to which the law testifies is given to faith. For that reason Paul can speak of "the

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[29]H. J. Schoeps, Paul (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, c.1959, 1961), pp. 209-210.

law of faith." Faith does not look to the performance of the law's demands for achieving the righteousness of the law, but to the promises of the law for receiving God's righteousness by grace. "Faith," in the phrase "the law of faith," is that which indicates the proper attitude to the law. Paul proclaims that faith in Jesus Christ by which the intentions of the law for life, realized in the Messiah, are granted to us.

It remains only to be added that this faith by which righteousness is received is not a human condition for righteousness. According to Kurt Stalder, righteousness by faith cannot indicate that instead of an unfulfillable condition for righteousness, the performance of works demanded by the law, we have a fulfillable condition, namely belief. Righteousness comes only from God Himself; it is awarded by His grace. This has always been the case.[30]

"In Christ" we fulfill the law of Christ

One might be considered just had it been possible to obey the law perfectly (Rom. 2:13,25). Paul says that "if a law had been given which could make alive, then righteousness would indeed be by the law" (Gal. 3:21). For Paul this circumstance first became a reality in the law of Christ. It is in Christ that the intention of the law to produce life and healing for mankind is produced.

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[30]Kurt Stalder, Das Werk des Geistes in der Heiligung bei Paulus (Zuerich: EVA-Verlag, c.1962), pp. 262, 269.

As the passages above indicate, Paul is concerned with the function of the law. This applies even to the Gentiles, of whom Paul can say that they show the "work" of the law written in their hearts (Rom. 2:15). The Gentiles too are responsible. The law, however it is manifested, confronts man with his sin and condemns. The function of the law is that it serves as a power for sin, not for salvation. Paul's Jewish contemporaries largely failed to comprehend this.[31] For Paul the gospel of God's new aeon action is the power for salvation.

The life and salvation which should have been produced by the proper functioning of the law is granted only in Christ. Only in Him who became "sin" for us is the righteousness intended by the law received (2 Cor. 5:21). The only law that functions properly is the law of Christ.

How does one recognize and stand in the law of Christ? One is in the law of Christ through the relationship to Christ, through faith in Christ. Paul calls this relationship being "in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1; Gal. 3:28). "In Christ," one is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; compare 4:6). What the creator originally intended for man, proclaimed in the law, is realized in Christ. From the vantage point of the new relationship with Christ (Gal. 2:20) one receives that which the law promised.

It is imperative to recall that, apart from the relationship to Christ himself, there is no "law of Christ" within which one can stand. One cannot separate the law of Christ from the person of Christ. The law

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[31] See Grundmann, XX, 54, who cites rabbinic evidence to the effect that God gave the law as the source of power for His people for salvation.

of Christ is not an object one can possess, nor a collection of rules to be obeyed. The law of Christ is fulfilled by that faith which becomes manifest in obedience to Christ (Romans 6). The essential content of the law of Christ is the surrender to Christ as one's Lord.[32]

To attempt to stand under any other law, or to conceive of the law of Christ as a law, the works of which are to be performed for righteousness, would be to negate the work of Christ. He has already fulfilled the law for us. The law and Christ constitute one unit for Paul, in that Christ is the fulfilling of the law, so that what the law should have effected is carried out by Christ. The Mosaic law is the law of Christ in the sense that it can be understood or heeded in Him.[33] It is only in Christ then one can seek the fulfillment of the law (2 Cor. 3:14-16). That law is not viewed as the law of Christ.

The law of Christ is the plumb line for God's demand on the man in Christ (Gal. 6:2). The Christian stands in an inner unity with Christ. Christ is the law of God within. The man in whom Christ lives is a new creation. He fulfills the law of God by faithfulness to the Christ written on his own heart. To this extent is is possible to indicate that which will be stated below in the final chapter, namely, that the man in Christ is his own law. Christ is the motivation and the

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[32]P. Anselm Guenthoer, "'Endziel des Gesetzes ist Christus' (Roem. 10,4)," Erbe und Auftrag, Benediktinische Monatsschrift, XLII (1967), 196.

[33]According to Albrecht Oepke, Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater, in Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament (Berlin: Evangelischer Verlagsanstalt, 1957), IX, 147, nomos tou Christou is a subjective genetive.

source of power for the moral life of the Christian (Rom. 12:1-2). The law of Christ within is the unearned gracious gift of God which does not confront man with the harsh demand "you shall," but enables the man in Christ to know and do what His law requires.

The man in Christ is not under the stark demand of the law but under grace (Rom. 6:14). He is released from the law and has received the righteousness of God apart from the law (Rom. 7:6; 3:21). In Christ the Christian has fulfilled the law. He no longer needs the prescriptions of the law as his norm or indeed as his point of orientation (Rom. 7:6). To reintroduce the law's demands, without understanding them from within the law of Christ, would give occasion to the remnant of sarx in the Christian man to explode into sin.

In the new aeon the Christian walks kata pneuma. Sin has been conquered in Christ. The man in Christ now has the freedom to choose that which is the expression of the law of Christ (Gal. 5:13--6:2). Paul can choose words from the Mosaic law which "in the law of Christ" form for one the will of God to be obeyed (1 Cor. 9:20-21; 10:6-8). Still the mold is not that of the letter of the law, but of the Spirit of God within, as will be stated in detail in the next chapter. The compulsion comes from the Spirit at work within, enabling a person to fulfill the law of Christ.

It is noteworthy that, when Paul speaks of the Christian's fulfilling of the law, he uses the verb plēroō, while elsewhere he speaks

of doing the law (nomon poieō).[34] A genuine fulfilling of the law becomes a reality in Christ. "In the law of Christ" the man in Christ carries out the requirement of God's law. He can convey that love of God which the various commandments are intended to elicit. He can bear the burdens of others. As Christ has fulfilled and Himself replaced the law of God for us, we are able, in Christ, to fulfill that law.

"The law of Christ": continuity in the new aeon

In the phrases "the law of Christ" and "the law of faith" Paul employs nomos to show the continuity with the old in God's action, even though the new aeon was brought in through Christ. This is the case particularly when Paul states that he is "in the law of Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21). From the vantage point of his freedom Paul can act as though he were under law, even though he is not under compulsion to be so (9:19-20). But even to be able to act as though he were without the law does not in fact mean, for the man in Christ, that he is outside of the law of God. He is a man living within the bounds of God's law because he is in the law of Christ. The will of God revealed for mankind in the Mosaic law has a continuing validity. Even though it is no longer determinative as God's plan of salvation, seen from the viewpoint of redemption in Christ, it can still serve to a great extent as the measure of man's moral response. Paul can suggest this to be true especially when writing to Corinth, where the problem of the congregation was not a tendency toward Judaizing but toward a "spiritual" libertinism.

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[34]Compare Rom. 8:4; 13:8,10; Gal. 5:14; 6:2 with Rom. 2:14; 7:15-21; Gal. 3:10,12; 5:3. At most Paul uses nomon teleō, Rom. 2:27.

It has often been suggested that Paul's style is one of expressing contrast and association. "When Paul says 'life,' he at once thinks 'not death,' from 'flesh' he comes to the opposite idea of 'Spirit,' from the 'spiritual' man to the 'natural,' and so on."[35] The phrase "the law of Christ" can show both the continuity with the old, and the contrast. Paul has no argument with the content of the Jewish ethic, but he is opposed to Jewish soteriology. Paul is opposed to an attempt to approach the law without Christ. He wishes to counter that use of the law which circumvents the event of the new aeon. Without Christ, the Torah is merely a dead letter; in Christ by the power of His Spirit it is spiritual, holy instruction (Rom. 7:14,12; 1 Cor. 9:10; 10:11). The law is now to be understood as the law of Christ. One ought no longer look to the Torah to secure the definitive command of God. One ought to look to "Christ," who is the new law, having Himself replaced the old. As the next chapter will indicate, it is the Spirit of Christ who is the final criterion.

Paul's phrase, "the law of faith" (Rom. 3:27), clearly conveys Paul's conviction of the continuity with the old in God's new action. Paul is making the point that God's righteousness has been given in Christ apart from the law (Rom. 3:21-22). This makes it clear that one dare not attempt to be justified or make his boast on the basis of performing the works of the law. Boasting is excluded because the righteousness of God comes on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ. God justifies both Jew

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[35]See Martin Dibelius and Werner Georg Kummel, Paul (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 39.

and Gentile on the basis of faith, and it is through faith that the law is rightly understood, as Paul explains in chapter 4. The righteousness which the law proclaims is appropriated by faith.

The "law" in the combination "the law of faith" is that law which testifies to the fact that justification is by faith. It is the law which, with the prophets, contains the witness to God's gift of His righteousness apart from law conceived of as an agent for self-justification (Rom. 3:21,20). The law shows that even circumcision was a seal of righteousness by faith (4:11). Paul can use the picture of the sign of obedience to the law, circumcision, to describe those who know themselves to be justified by faith.[36] The "law" in "the law of faith" is not some principle, divine order, or new norm, but the Old Testament law.[37]

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[36]See Gerhard Friedrich, "Das Gesetz des Glaubens Roem. 3,27," Theologische Zeitschrift, X (1954), 416.

[37]Support for this position is implied in the argument concerning the purpose of Romans offered by Hans-Werner Bartsch, "The Concept of Faith in Paul's Letter to the Romans," Biblical Research, XIII (1968), 41-53. Bartsch asserts that Paul's purpose in writing the letter to Rome is to attempt a reconciliation between Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome. The decree of Claudius drove Jewish-Christians from Rome in 49: they did not return until the decree expired in 54. The Gentile-Christians in Rome were intent on not being mistaken for Jews. Their watchword was probably "faith," and Paul has to warn them that faith does not mean overthrowing the law (3:31). He describes his own mission as seeking the obedience of the nation. "Obedience" meanwhile, had become the watchword of the Jewish-Christians, following the development in Judaism. Paul attempts to correct each of the two concepts by the other. So we have "the obedience of faith," 1:5, and "with one voice glorify the God and Father," 15:6. "From faith to faith," 1:17, indicates that righteousness has always been by faith. But chapter 6, 12 and 13 stress the need for obedience also. Bartsch does not apply his theory to Rom. 3:27, but "the law of faith" could also fit the twin emphases of faith in Christ alone on the one hand, and on the other, the call for obedience to God. His will was already revealed in the law, Paul's Scripture (Cf. Rom. 3:21-31).

While "the law of Christ" and "the law of faith" indicate that in Paul's gospel there is continuity with the old in God's action, at the same time there is implied the transcending of the old. The law must first become the law of Christ before it can be included in God's new action, effected through Christ. There is no reason for a Christian to have a negative attitude toward the law; yet he knows that in the new aeon it is not circumcision or the lack of it that counts, but the new creation (Gal. 6:15). The commands of the Torah must be interpreted through the eyes of Christ. Even as the righteousness of the law is appropriated only through faith in Christ, so all that the law demands is appropriated only "in Christ." The Christian is still called to fulfill the law of Christ, and "along the way all that is in the Law of Moses finds fulfillment."[38] "In the law of Christ" indicates that because of the new fact of history, Christ having fulfilled and replaced the law for us, all the intention of the law is realized for us in Christ.

## Summary

Paul's central concern is to proclaim Christ, God's new aeon action for the salvation of man. Paul is not interested in redefining the law but in announcing that Christ has fulfilled and so replaced the law.

Christ is the goal of the law in that the promise of the law to lead to righteousness has been realized through Christ's work. Paul

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[38]Frederick W. Danker, "Faith Without Works," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXVII (August 1956), 601.

employs the phrase "the law of Christ" to support his contention that the law is good and has been established by what Christ achieved.

At the same time, Christ is the end of the law, for its demand and promise have been subsumed under Christ. Christ has replaced the law in God's plan for the healing of mankind.

Moreover, it is the man in Christ who can best appreciate the law and understand it as a valid revelation of the will of God. Paul maintains that even the Old Covenant revelation called for faith as the means of appropriating the gift of God.

Paul's phrases, "the law of Christ" and "the law of faith," indicate continuity between the old and the new in God's activity, but also the transcending of the old by God's new aeon action.

# CHAPTER IV

## LIFE "IN THE LAW OF CHRIST" IS ACTUALIZED BY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

### The Spirit Transmits the Work of Christ to Men in Christ

#### The presence of the Spirit is the proof of the new aeon

Paul calls upon the Galatian Christians to fulfill "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). In the first verse of the chapter Paul calls those whom he is addressing "the spiritual ones" and asks them to restore erring brothers in a "spirit" of meekness. In the preceding five verses (5:22-24), Paul had been describing "the fruit of the Spirit," and encouraged those who "live in the Spirit" to also "walk according to the Spirit." The proximity of "pneuma" to Paul's exhortation to "fulfill the law of Christ" is in accord with his teaching. The Spirit of Christ promotes the new life of the Christian "in the law of Christ."

In the third chapter of Romans Paul says that through faith in Christ we actually confirm the law. That affirmation is explicated in chapter 8, where the law that is considered valid is now understood to be "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (8:2). The law is established because the Spirit brings to the man in Christ that life which the law of God was intended to bring to His people.

The love of God, so manifested in the work of Christ that grace should reign for life eternal, is conveyed to human hearts through the

gift of the Spirit (Rom. 5:5). The Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead gives life to those in whom He dwells (Rom. 8:11).

The presence of the Spirit is the proof of the new aeon. In the Old Testament and in Judaism the Spirit is the gift and the power of the end-time. In the Old Testament the Spirit is an eschatological gift, to be a possession of the community (Is. 32:15), God's powerful presence among His people (Haggai 2:5).[1] Intertestamental literature announces the Spirit as the gift of the Messianic Age.[2] According to one version of the Testament of Judah (24:2-3), we read of the star from Jacob of whom it is said, "And the heavens shall be opened unto him, to pour out the spirit, even the blessing of the Holy Father; And he shall pour out the spirit of grace upon you." Another version is similar:

> And the heavens shall be opened unto him, And the blessings of the Holy Father will be poured down upon him. And he will pour down upon us the spirit of grace. And ye shall be his true children by adoption.[3]

In the Testament of Levi (18:7) we have a parallel expression concerning this Messianic figure: "And the glory of the Most High shall be uttered over him, And the spirit of understanding and sanctification shall rest upon him . . . ."[4] The Book of Jubilees (1:23) looks forward

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[1]See the Old Testament evidence in Werner Bieder, "pneuma," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1968), VI, 370. Hereafter this work will be referred to as TDNT.

[2]See Erik Sjoeberg, "pneuma," TDNT, VI, 384.

[3]Translations from R. H. Charles, The Testaments of The Twelve Patriarchs (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1908), p. 96.

[4]Ibid., p. 64.

to the day when God says, "I will circumcize the foreskin of their heart and the foreskin of the heart of their seed, and I will create in them a holy spirit, and I will cleanse them . . . ."[5] According to 4 Ezra (6:26), in the messianic time "shall the heart of the inhabitants (of the world) be changed, and be converted to a different spirit."[6]

A common supposition in the rabbinic literature is that a new impartation of the Spirit can be expected in the messianic time.[7] A late rabbinic passage refers to the Spirit of God mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis (1:2) as the King, the Messiah. By allegorical indication the Messiah and the Spirit are thus related.[8]

According to W. D. Davies, rabbinic thought, going back to Old Testament precedents, conceived of the Age to Come as having a two-fold thrust: "The fulfillment of the expectation of an invasion of the Spirit and of a perfect conformity to the Torah."[9] Davies indicates that "for the Rabbis the Age to Come would be a period when Spirit and

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[5]Translation from R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), II, 12.

[6]Ibid., II, 576.

[7]See the clear examples in Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, edited by Herman L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, c.1926), III, 240. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Strack-Billerbeck.

[8]Strack-Billerbeck, II, 350: "R. Schimeon b. Laquisch (um 250) . . . . Und der 'Geist Gottes' schwebte, damit ist der Koenig, der Messiah gemeint, wie es heiszt Jes 11,2: Es ruht auf ihm der Geist Jahves."

[9]W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: SPCK, c.1948), p. 223.

Law would be coincident and not opposed."[10] The way in which Spirit and Law are not opposed in the messianic age, as seen by the rabbis, is quite different, however, from the way in which Paul presents the phenomenon of the new aeon. One rabbi wrote of the Spirit being given as the reward for the faithful assumption of the command of the Law.[11] According to Paul, the Spirit is a gift through Christ, who has already fulfilled the law for us. The Spirit is not received as a reward for obeying the commands of the law or for believing. Yet Paul does speak of "the law of the Spirit of life." Part of the purpose of this chapter is to show that for Paul the Spirit brings the law into proper perspective for men in Christ. For those who have new life in Christ, the Spirit grants a healthy relationship to the law of God. As that law has been both fulfilled and replaced by Christ, it can be appropriated by the man in Christ. It can be followed by those who now walk according to the Spirit.

The advent of the Spirit experienced in the church was the demonstration that with the coming of Christ the Age to Come had become a present fact.[12] The possession of the Spirit, the Author of the Christian community, was the decisive new factor. In the words of H. J. Schoeps,

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[10] Ibid., p. 224.

[11] Strack-Billerbeck, II, 135: "R. Nechemja (um 150) hat gesagt: Wer ein Gebot auf sich nimmt im Glauben, der ist wurdig, dasz der heil. Geist auf ihm ruhe. Denn so finden wir es bei unsren Vaetern; denn zum Lohn dafuer, dasz unsre Vaeter an Jahve geglaubt haben, haben sie erlangt, dasz der heil. Geist auf ihnen ruhte u. sie ein Lied sagten (sangen) . . . ." This is listed as part of the commentary on Luke 2:25.

[12] Davies, p. 223.

> The Spirit promised by the prophets as the gift of the last age (cf. Is. 32:15-18; Ez. 26:26ff.; 37:5ff.; Joel 2:28ff., etc.) has been imparted to all believers. His efficacious operation in the community (1 Cor. 12:6-11; 14:25) shows that the last age has dawned; it is arrabōn (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5), aparchē (Rom. 8:23), even though the consummation is not yet.[13]

The gift of the Spirit is evidence that God has acted in a new way to give His righteousness to men. Because Christ through His Spirit dwells in the man in Christ (Rom. 8:9,11), the demands of the law fulfilled by Christ have been fulfilled by the man in Christ. The righteousness of the law has now been given by this new act of God. The dilemma of man confronted by the law, posed in Romans chapter 7, is resolved by God's new action. He has granted the gift of His Spirit, Romans 8. The Spirit dwells within men so that the same power operative in raising Christ from the dead might be at work to enable men in Christ to fulfill what the law requires (Rom. 8:11; 4).

The gift of the Spirit is the sign that God has done a new thing. The law could not make alive (Romans 7; Gal. 3:21); it was a law of sin and of death (Rom. 8:2). Now the life intended by the law has been given to the Christian. Now the law is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." For the man in Christ the gift of the Spirit of Christ marks the end of condemnation. The Spirit ends the frustration of the law. The Spirit denotes the new order, for the Spirit makes alive (2 Cor. 3:6). By the power of the Spirit one is able to confess Jesus as Lord (1 Cor. 12:3-5) in union with whom one is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:14), a new man (Col. 3:10), able to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).

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[13]H. J. Schoeps, Paul (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, c.1959, 1961), p. 212.

What Christ is for history the Spirit is for the church

By means of the Spirit a person becomes part of the Body of Christ in baptism (1 Cor. 12:13). The significance of Jesus Christ and Him crucified is revealed by God through the Spirit (Rom. 8:16-17). God's gracious acts are transmitted by His Spirit to the spirit of man (1 Cor. 2:2,10,13). The Spirit is the subjective cause of justification, as Eduard Schweizer comments on the basis of 1 Cor. 6:11:

> The onoma tou kuriou is the objective cause and the pneuma the subjective cause of dikaiōthenai. Accordingly einai en pneumati is synonymous with en Christou. Both denote the existence of the believer. If he lives in the sphere of the work of Christ as the One who was crucified and raised again for him, he also lives in the sphere of the work of the Spirit, who reveals Christ and imparts salvation to him.[14]

Schweizer has also pointed out that in the eighth chapter of Romans (verses 1,9-10), Paul can use interchangeably the expressions "the Spirit of God in you" and "Christ in you," or "those in Christ" and "you . . . in the Spirit." "No material distinction can be discerned here."[15] Schweizer suggests that for Paul the Spirit is "a power into whose sphere man has come and which shapes his phronein, his peripatein, his hupotassessthai to nomo tou theou."[16] This power is "the manner in which the kurios is present to the community. This explains the equation with and subordination to the kurios, 2 Cor. 3:17-18."[17] In

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[14]Eduard Schweizer, "Pneuma," TDNT, VI, 427.

[15]Ibid., VI, 433.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., VI, 434.

an earlier explanation of this passage, Schweizer claimed that "in so far as Christ is regarded in His significance for community, in His powerful action upon it, He can be identified with the pneuma."[18]

According to this section of Paul's second letter to Corinth, the Spirit makes manifest for the church the new situation in Christ. The Spirit is the presence of the Lord at work among His people. In this way the freedom God intends for His people is realized. What Christ is for history the Spirit is for the individual. This third chapter asks: how is the law to be read? Paul, opposing the legalistic appeal to the letter of the Mosaic law, proclaims that Moses is to be understood only through the freedom found in Christ. The veil (3:14), which accompanies reading the law as though it were gramma (3:6), can be removed only through Christ, whose Spirit gives life. Only when the veil is removed through Christ can the law be properly heard. The Spirit of the Lord enables the church to read the Old Testament.

According to verse 16 of this chapter, "When a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed." How is this done? "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (3:17). Martin McNamara has attempted to shed some light on these passages on the basis of his study of the Targums:

> We may sum up the evidence of TJI thus: the Lord with whom Moses and Israel conversed in the tent of the meeting is said to be "the Spirit" (Nm 7,89) or "the Holy Spirit" (Ex 33,16). The bearing of these texts on 2 Cor. 3,17 is evident. In 3,16 Paul has said that whenever an Israelite turns in repentance to the Lord the veil is taken away. We

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[18] Ibid., VI, 419.

> have seen how the text is probably dependent on TJI Ex 33,7 and that "the Lord" (kurios) is probably "the Lord" referred to in the text of Exodus, rather than Christ; though conversion to Christ is also implied by the nature of things. When in the very following verse Paul says abruptly, "the Lord is the Spirit," an identification which we find in TJI Ex 33,16 and in its parallel passage TJI Nm 7,89, it is hard to believe that the Apostle is not here still in dependence on the liturgical understanding of Israel's relation with God in the tent of the meeting as expressed in TJI. In TJI the Lord is the Spirit in so far as he reveals God's will to Israel. For Paul this same Lord who is the Spirit will now fulfill the same function each time one turns to him by conversion. The Spirit will show him the true place of the Mosaic dispensation in God's plan; he will likewise give him the power to live according to God's will because he is a lifegiving Spirit (3,6.8), and where this Spirit is there is liberty (3,17), a liberty that the letter of the Law excluded rather than bestowed.[19]

McNamara makes clear that he does not mean to exclude from ho kurios (2 Cor. 3:17a) a reference to Christ, since for Paul conversion would imply acceptance of Christ: "'To turn to the Lord' in the true sense will also mean acceptance of the Person and mission of Christ."[20] To the extent that McNamara's analysis is accurate, it supports that understanding of Paul's words which sees the Spirit of Christ giving the freedom to be able to receive God's self-disclosure in the new aeon. At the same time, the Spirit enables the man in Christ to transcend any apparent conflict between God's former revelation and the new disclosure in Christ. The Mosaic law can be read with understanding by those who now recognize by the Spirit that Christ is the Lord (2 Cor. 3:14; 1 Cor. 12:3). This helps to explain Paul's use of the phrase "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

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[19]Martin McNamara, The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1966), p. 187.

[20]Ibid., p. 178.

The possession of the Spirit is an absolute necessity (Rom. 8:9b). The Spirit is not an optional, ancillary accessory. The Spirit marks the presence of the righteousness of God effected by Christ. The Spirit of Christ is the very existence of the new community, its life, its freedom (1 Cor. 12:6-11). Paul's argument for showing that the Spirit brings the work of Christ to the church might proceed something like this: The law demanded righteousness for the purpose of giving life with God. Christ fulfilled the demand of the law for righteousness. The Spirit of Christ transmits Christ's fulfilling of the law to us. Through the Spirit of Christ we have life with God.

The Spirit, not nomos, offers evidence of sonship

It was vital for Paul to argue that life with God comes through the Spirit (Rom. 7:6). The Spirit brings the intended purpose of the law of God to realization (Rom. 8:4). The freedom to be able to recognize God as Father comes as a gift of the Spirit (Gal. 4:6). It does not ensue on the basis of boasting in one's own performance of the demands of the law, nor from that confidence which trusts the fading glory granted to the sons of Israel (2 Cor. 3:6-8). The Spirit enables those who through faith and baptism are joined to Christ to give expression to their new situation as sons of God (Gal. 3:27; 4:6).

Paul had to remind the Galatians that their relation of sonship testified to by the Spirit did not come to them on the basis of performance of the demands of the law (Gal. 3:2-5). The sons of Israel had come to trust in their possession of the law. "In Judaism the adoration

of the law approached that given to God Himself."[21] The Torah was the privileged possession of Israel, but God's gift was turned into Israel's merit. One rabbi put it like this: "It was because the Holy One desired to give Israel an opportunity to acquire merit, that he gave them so much Torah and so many commandments."[22] Similarly we read that "the merits of the righteous availed for other."[23] According to the Letter of Aristeas, the observance of the law is that which brings righteousness:

> Our law commands us not to injure anyone in word or deed. Now concerning these things I have spoken briefly to show you that all (these regulations) have been made with a view to righteousness, and that nothing in scripture has been commanded without good reason or idly, but in order that throughout our lives and in (all) our actions we may deal righteously with all men, being mindful of God who rules (over us). And so concerning food and unclean reptiles and beasts, every regulation aims at righteousness and righteous relations between men.[24]

For Israel, having the law constituted being the kingdom of God.[25] The quantity of the law given was a measure of God's love to Israel. "To

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[21]Martin H. Scharlemann, Stephen: A Singular Saint (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, c.1968), p. 101. See pp. 99-102 for evidence of the role of inordinate importance the law had assumed among the Jews.

[22]See Ralph Marcus, Law in the Apocrypha (New York: AMS Press, c.1927), p. 57.

[23]Davies, p. 268. For extensive illustration of the teaching concerning the earning of merit on the basis of obedience to the law see Solomon Schechter, Aspects of Rabbinic Theology (New York: Schocken Books, c.1909, 1961).

[24]Translation from Marcus, p. 54.

[25]Schechter, p. 142.

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF

the nations of the earth," it was said, "he gave some few laws; but his love to Israel was particularly manifested by the fullness and completeness of the Torah, which is wholly theirs."[26] To study this law was the most exalted occupation, for,

> a transgression takes away (the merit acquired by fulfilling) a commandment, but a transgression does not take away (the merit acquired by studying) Torah, for it is said, (Song of Songs, ix,71), "Many waters cannot extinguish love."[27]

Ex. 32:16 should be interpreted as follows:

> Read not <u>haruth</u> (graven) but <u>heruth</u> (freedom), for none is your freeman but he who is occupied with the study of Torah. And every one who is occupied in the study of Torah, lo, he exalts himself . . .[28]

Paul may well have been arguing in the third chapter of 2 Corinthians against such an interpretation as this, which would claim that the freedom of the sons of God is produced by the study and performance of the law. The idea is expressed in later rabbinic writing also, and as follows:

> R. Jeremian said to R. Ze'era: It says in Job of Cheol (III,19), (Small and great are there, and the slave is free of his master.) Is it not obvious that small and great are there? It means, "He who, for the sake of the words of the Torah, makes himself small in this world, will be great in the world to come, and he who, for the sake of the words of the Torah, makes himself as a slave in this world, will be a free man in the world to come."[29]

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[26]Quoted in Schechter, pp. 143-144.

[27]Rabbi Menahem bar Yose, quoted in Marcus, p. 44.

[28]<u>The Ethics of the Talmud: Savings of the Fathers</u>, edited by R. Travers Hereford (New York: Schocken Books, c.1945, 1962), p. 151.

[29]The date is about 320. Quoted from C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, <u>A Rabbinic Anthology</u> (Meridian Books, Inc., n.d.), p. 129. See p. 132 for examples of the claim that the Law gives life.

Paul believed that the very striving to fulfill the law to obtain the gift of life was doomed to frustration. He had experienced the grace of God as a free gift, apart from the works of the law. He had encountered the Spirit of Christ as the power of God which had transferred him into the new aeon. The Spirit of Christ has set him free from slavery to the law and to sin. He knew the Spirit of Christ at work within as the power designating the man in Christ as a child of God.

## The Law is Fulfilled by "the Law of the Spirit of Life"

### Romans 7 shows the plight of man under the power of law connected with sin

In the eighth chapter of Romans Paul describes the gift of the Spirit as the power for life and the power over death (Rom. 8:10-11). There is no condemnation for those in Christ, because they are in the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. They have been set free. The requirement of the law is fulfilled in them.

They have been released from the law, the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2). Chapter 7 makes clear why it is necessary to be liberated from the law: the law is manipulated by sin so that it produces death instead of life. This pericope shows the plight of man under the power of the law as it is affected by sin. Paul shows that man is actually enslaved by the law (7:1-6). Yet he claims that the law itself is holy, good, and spiritual (7:12,14,16). The fact that Paul does this has important consequences for understanding what nomos means in the passage "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2). It also sheds

some light on "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). It is imperative therefore that the seventh chapter of Romans be accurately interpreted.

Paul claims that the man in Christ is a slave to the law. Yet much of chapter 7 is actually a defense of the law. Paul wants it to be understood that it is not the law of God which is at fault. The law is not "sin" and does not of itself lead to death. It is always intended to bring life. Moreover, the defense is necessary because "the guilt of sin is forfeited once the law is no longer regarded as God's demand, since man's guilt results from his failure to fulfill that demand."[30] The law is not sin, and yet there is a close connection. Paul must give an explanation of this relationship.

One should understand that in the seventh chapter of Romans Paul is writing of man without Christ, and not of the Christian man. Anders Nygren is a recent interpreter in a long line of traditional opinion asserting that Paul is describing his own experience or that of a Christian.[31] Nygren's arguments have been refuted by Althaus and Mitton among others. The chief objections to Nygren's point of view will be listed here.[32]

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[30]Rudolf Bultmann, The Old and New Man, translated from the German by Keith R. Crim (Richmond, Va: John Know Press, c.1964, 1967), p. 41.

[31]Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1949), pp. 284-303.

[32]See Paul Althaus, "Zur Auslegung von Roem. 7,14ff," Theologische Literaturzeitung, LXXVII (1952), cols. 475-480, and C. Leslie Mitton, "Romans--vii Reconsidered," The Expository Times, LXV, (1953/1954), 78-81, 99-103, 182-185.

Nygren claims that the switch in verse 14 to the present tense indicates that Paul is speaking of what the Christian is now. He refers to it as "the law in the situation of the new aeon."[33] But Althaus shows that Nygren has overlooked the gar (7:14) which connects the two sections (7:7-13 and 7:14-25). The shift in tenses can be explained by Paul's moving from the point before the confrontation with the law (7:7-11) to the description of what happens when the encounter occurs.[34] Mitton suggests that the present tenses may be thought of as the "historic present."[35] Althaus also points out that verse 14 picks up the thought of verse 5 which describes a past situation, without Christ.[36]

Nygren points out that there is nothing in the seventh chapter of Romans which is parallel to the passage in Philippians (3:6), where Paul indicates he is referring to his earlier life. Therefore Romans 7 must refer to the Christian situation. However, Mitton points out that, in Philippians, Paul is defending himself against men "who claim that their Jewish status and their strict Pharisaic obedience to the Law give them the right to pass judgment on him." So he speaks "according to the outward standards by which they judge their own conduct." He can thus claim to be "accepted as" blameless.[37]

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[33]Nygren, pp. 276-277.

[34]Althaus, LXXVII, col. 477.

[35]Mitton, XV, 100.

[36]Althaus, LXXVII, col. 477.

[37]Mitton, LXV, 100-101.

Nygren claims that since Romans 5 through 8 refers to the Christian life, if part of chapter 7 referred to life without Christ, it would be an awkward parenthesis. He goes so far as to say that "it falls entirely outside of the frame of the subject which Paul is discussing."[38] But that robs Paul of the right to describe the new situation in Christ by means of contrasting it with the attempt to fulfill the law of God on one's own. Chapter 7 is the negative prelude to chapter 8, in which Paul demonstrates how in the Spirit of Christ the law is fulfilled.

Nygren states that in chapter 7 (14-25) Paul has in mind "a certain duality in the Christian life," similar to the flesh-Spirit antithesis in Galatians (5:17).[39] Against this Mitton claims that, by failing to look at the preceding verse in Galatians, Nygren

> has seriously distorted Paul's meaning. . . . Ro 7 portrays the mastery of the flesh in unaided man, and Gal. 5:17 the persisting strength of the flesh in the Christian. But neither declares the mastery of the flesh to be a permanent evil from which there is no deliverance. It is an evil, and an enduring one, but it is one for which an enduring remedy has been supplied. Gal. 5:16 offers that remedy. The Christian will still be aware of the continuing strength of the flesh, and of the need for unceasing watchfulness, but he need not any longer "fulfill its promptings." The strong man has been bound by a stronger.[40]

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[38]Nygren, p. 228.

[39]Ibid., pp. 293-295.

[40]Mitton, LXV, 102.

Althaus comments on the same Galatians passage: Paul is giving the assurance that Christians, given the Spirit, are no longer to be hindered by the flesh from doing the will of God. Nygren fails to recognize that the verse in question breathes great confidence.[41]

Much of the seventh chapter of Romans is not an accurate expression of the life of the man in Christ. The "I" speaking in verse 14 is "sold under sin," a statement much stronger than the reference to the sarx in Galatians (5:16-17). A great contrast occurs between chapters 7 and 8. Paul stresses man attempting to stand alone in chapter 7. The story is told in the first person singular, with the "I" (egō) occurring eight times, concluding with the autos egō of the last verse.[42] In contrast egō does not occur at all in chapter 8, where Paul speaks predominantly in the first or second person plural.

In Rom. 7:5-6, Paul presents the themes of verses 7 to 25 and chapter 8, respectively. In verse 5 we read that sin takes advantage of the law and thus produces death in us. In verses 7 to 13 Paul makes clear that sin as desire, not the law, deceives and leads to death. Paul is not interested in speaking about individual transgressions of the law. He delineates that sinful aspiration of man which subverts the intention of the law.

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[41]Althaus, LXXVII, col. 478.

[42]Mitton, LXV, 134-135, finds this phrase the key to the chapter. It is the "then I myself" in contrast to the opening verse of chapter 8, "Now in Christ."

Paul chooses one aspect of the commandments of God to express the thrust of the law.[43] The law exposes the nature of sin as the drive for autonomy, man's impulse for self-assertion (Rom. 7:7). But in exposing this kind of "lust," the law does not quell it, but rather, through confrontation, induces the reaction of further self-affirmation (7:8-9). This coveting can be for either evil or "good," as in the pursuit of righteousness (10:3). The law's condemnation of self-assertion induces more of the same. Sin is a power in man which attempts to grasp life on its own terms. The law testifies to just that fact. So the law itself is good, for from the perspective of the man in Christ, it shows how sinful sin is. The "good" law, intended to bring life, does not in fact produce it in the man who is bound by his sarx (Rom. 7:15-23). Man determined to assert himself is deceived by that very sin. He finds that both his actions and his intentions, emanating from the sarkinos point of view (7:14), result in death instead of life. That man is not even aware of his dilemma (7:15), for a veil covers his understanding of the law. He fails to understand the radical nature of sin which the law announces.[44]

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[43] entolē designates the Mosaic law. Cf. Christian Maurer, Die Gesetzeslehre des Paulus (Zurich: A. G. Zollikon, 1941), p. 48. See also Guenther Bornkamm, Early Christian Experience, translated from the German by Paul L. Hammer (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers, c.1969), p. 102, note 7: "With 'you shall not covet,' the content of the ninth and tenth commandments are summarized here as in Rom. 13.9, and with them in our passage the entire Decalogue (already pre-Pauline), cf. IV Macc. 2.6."

[44] Cf. 2 Cor. 3:14-15, and see Bultmann, p. 43.

The law then becomes "another law," estranged from its original purpose by sin. It becomes the law made sinful as a result of man's assertive sarx (7:23). The intention of the law, as perceived by the human mind, is frustrated by the fact that such human perception still strives to fulfill the requirements of the law on its own terms. That is man's situation without Christ.

Thus the good law works out its judgment on the man bound to the old aeon. For sin, seeking righteousness on the basis of works of the law, always perverts the law of God.[45] Here man is identified with Adam, who is deceived by the serpent (Rom. 7:11). The plight of man is that he is deceived by sin, which uses "the flesh as its seat of operations and the Law as an instrument."[46] Paul is "uttering mankind's great cry of its own inability."[47]

Paul announces to those who would seek to achieve righteousness on the basis of their own endeavor that this is the very sin which the law condemns. This is the actual, objective description applicable to anyone, for the law really does provide the opportunity for sin to lead to death. Paul is not trying to describe his personal history, but is detailing what happens when man confronts the law on his own. When Paul

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[45]Cf. Kurt Stalder, Das Werk des Geistes in der Heiligung bei Paulus (Zuerich: EVZ-Verlag, c.1962), p. 306.

[46]Richard N. Longenecker, Paul, Apostle of Liberty (New York: Harper & Row, c.1964), p. 92. Longenecker shows the parallel between Genesis 2 and Romans 7, and the continuity between Romans 5 and 7.

[47]Ibid., p. 114.

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF C

mentioned his earlier life in his letter to Philippi (3:5-6), he did not indicate that he found the pursuit of righteousness as a source of confusion creating a quandary then. Paul can analyze the connection between sin and the law the way he does in Romans 7 because he is writing from the perspective of a man in Christ. He is describing man in revolt against God.[48]

In the first six verses of chapter 7, Paul declares that the man in Christ is free from the law and is now able to serve in the newness of the Spirit. Then the Spirit is not mentioned again in the rest of the chapter, the parenthesis in which Paul describes the plight of man confronted with the law apart from the Spirit of Christ. By contrast, in chapter 8 Paul shows how through the Spirit of Christ the man in Christ can overcome his sinful sarx, fulfill the law, and receive the gift of life.

Nygren's contention must be rejected. The seventh chapter of Romans should be interpreted as showing the plight of unregenerate man, that is, man in his solidarity with Adam, man under the law. This view of man becomes visible from the vantage point of the new aeon. In this way chapter 7 serves as a prelude to Paul's proclamation of chapter 8

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[48]Several interpreters have demonstrated that Paul is not speaking of his "pre-Christian" days. Herbert Braun has claimed that there is no precedent in Qumran for the "willing-doing" dilemma described by Paul in Rom. 7:19-20. The cleft between the will and the doing of Paul is wider than the "yes and no to the Tora" known in Qumran. The latter lie next to each other, while Paul's cleft breaks out just in the following of the Tora. See Braun's "Roemer 7, 7-25 und das Selbstverstaendnis des Qumran-Frommen," Gesammelte Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwalt (Tuebingen: J. C. V. Mohr, c.1962), p. 116.

that in the Spirit of Christ there is no longer any condemnation. Moreover, in the Spirit of Christ the goal of the law for life is realized and the requirement of the law is fulfillable.

### The law manipulated by sin must be replaced by the law of the Spirit

Paul makes a decisive switch as he moves from the seventh to the eighth chapters of Romans. The transition is from the situation of this aeon to that of the new aeon in Christ. Paul shifts from a portrayal of the pursuit of righteousness on the basis of performance of the demands of the law, to the fulfilling of the law in the Spirit. For the man in this aeon the law is inadequate, a blind alley.[49] The very works of the law, when pursued in the hope of self-justification, separate the law from God. Those who attempt to use the law as a means of attaining to the righteousness of God find themselves under a curse, for they are in revolt against the God whose salvation is testified to by the law.[50]

The end of condemnation is found now in Christ Jesus. Freedom from that sin which perverts the law into an agent of death is granted in "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1-2). God now discloses Himself and His righteousness in the new aeon in Christ through the Spirit. This is the only way in which the law of God can be encountered. A decidedly new situation prevails.

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[49]Maurer, p. 87: "Das Gesetz . . . fuehrte gerade den Frommen in die Sackgasse seiner eigenen Gerechtigkeit und damit in die Gesetzlichkeit."

[50]Cf. Ragnar Bring, Christus und das Gesetz (Leiden: E. J. Brill, c.1969), p. 12.

Now it is one or the other. Before the parenthesis of the seventh chapter of Romans (7-25), in the use of the interjection nuni de (Rom. 7:6), Paul had already indicated that a new situation had been effected. "But now" we are no longer enslaved by sin (6:6); rather we are able to serve in the newness given by the Spirit. The time for measuring oneself according to the prescriptions of the law is over (7:6). The gramma refers to the law as Israel had received it, the commandments written in stone.[51] In contrasting gramma and pneuma Paul is not merely speaking of a contrast between the wording of the law and a sense that can be read into it. The Jewish rabbis "frequently acted on the assumption that the Letter and the Spirit supplemented one another."[52] Paul is proclaiming the presence of the new aeon, in which the former things are passing away. The man in Christ is a new creation.[53]

In the new aeon God gives the Spirit as verification of His new creative act. Because the law is gramma it does not have the power to release men from the stranglehold of sin. The law can demand righteousness

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[51]Peter Gottvied Verweijs, Evangelium und Neues Gesetz in der aeltesten Christenheit bis auf Marcion (Utrecht-Holland: Drukkerij Em Uitgeverij V/H Kemink En Zoon N. V. Domplein, 1960), p. 68. Verweijs has support in Maurer, p. 35, for his contention that gramma refers to an historical situation. See also Bernardin Schneider, "The Meaning of St. Paul's Antithesis 'The Letter and the Spirit,'" The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XV.2 (April 1953), 207, who concludes that "gramma means the Law of Moses, particularly the Decalogue, as the merely written norm of morality of the old covenant."

[52]Boaz Cohen, "Note on Letter and Spirit in the New Testament," Harvard Theological Review, XVII (1954), 202.

[53]Cohen suggests that "Paul is playing with the legal notion current in Jewish and Roman law, that an earlier testament may be abrogated by a subsequent one, and that a will is to be interpreted according to the Spirit," p. 201.

but cannot give it (Gal. 3:21). The law is unable to work the fulfilling of its own prescriptions. The law works a curse because it is bound to a negative power, that of sin. The law can become established only when it is yoked to the Spirit of Christ, through whom it is fulfilled. In that way can it be free from sarx and sin. It is the law "of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" that sets free.

Therefore the choice must be made. Works of the law must be rejected in favor of that faith in Christ wrought in the hearts of men by the Spirit (Gal. 3:2-5; Rom. 2:29). The old law should have led to life, but manipulated by sin, leads to death. It must therefore be replaced by the Spirit, through whom is realized the intent of the law to produce life.

The Spirit solves the predicament of the law's impotence

Paul asserts that the law is spiritual (Rom. 7:14). It comes from God, announcing His will, and so its content is holy, just, good and beautiful (7:12,16). Yet when contrasted with the Spirit of God, known now in Christ, the Mosaic law is gramma. It lacks the power of the Spirit (Rom. 7:6; 2:29; 2 Cor. 3:6). The law is no match for the sin of sarkinos man.[54] The law condemns the sinful deed but doesn't dissipate the power of sin. Man as sarkinos is sold under sin. He is on a

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[54]According to Peter Blaeser, "Das Gesetz bei Paulus," Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, edited by Max Meinertz (Muenster: Aschendorffsche Verlags-buchhandlung, 1941), XIX, 1-2, 121, sarkinos is a stronger term than sarkikos. "Sarkinos bedeutet mehr als sarkikos, dasz die Sarx einen Grundbestandteil des Menschen bildet. Vgl. die Adjektive dermatinos Mt 3, 4 und akanthinos Mk 15, 17, wo auch die Endung--inos den Adjektiven die gleiche Qualitaet gibt."

different plane of existence and cannot respond positively to the spirituality of the law (Rom. 7:14). The law is impotent to work the righteousness of God in man. From this tragic situation arises the human quandary.

The solution is found in the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2). First, one must know that life has come in Christ Jesus. As explicated in the previous chapter, Christ has fulfilled the demands and realized the promise of the law, replacing it by Himself as God's agent of salvation in the new aeon. In writing to Corinth (2 Cor. 3:14) Paul says that the veil over the law of Moses is removed in Christ. The Israelites must now turn not to Moses but to Christ, who is the Rock from which life-giving waters flow (1 Cor. 10:2). He is the real goal of the law (Rom. 10:4). Since the Kurios to whom Israel must now give heed is identified with the Spirit, turning to Christ means to yield to the Spirit of Christ. Life then in the new diakonia is found, not in the gramma of the Mosaic law but in the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:6,8).[55] The Spirit is the bridge between Christ's fulfilling of the law and the individual. Christ not only fulfilled the righteousness of the law for us but also gave His Spirit that the Law's requirement might be fulfilled in us (Rom. 8:4). We can walk by the Spirit because the Spirit of Christ has brought the work of Christ to us. The Spirit of Christ dwells in us so that we have life (Rom. 8:8,11). The Spirit conveys the salvation effected by Christ to man (1 Cor. 6:11). The Spirit is the work of Christ effected in the heart of man (Rom. 2:29).

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[55]Cf. Schweizer, VI, 418.

The Spirit of Christ brings power for life. The contrast in Paul's second letter to Corinth (3:6) between gramma and pneuma is not a distinction between the letter of Scripture and a deeper meaning to be discovered in its proper understanding.[56] Pneuma in verse 6 has the same meaning as in verse 3, where the Corinthians are described as letters written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God. The reference by Paul to the words of Jeremiah (31:33) indicates that pneuma means God's intention for life has been realized in the Corinthians. The Spirit of the Lord provides the power for freedom (2 Cor. 3:17). The Spirit is the power of God giving life to the faithful so that they are no longer under the law (Gal. 5:18). The Galatian heathen came to faith in Christ, not through the possession of the law but through that proclamation attended by the powerful (dunamis) working of the Spirit (Gal. 3:2-5). The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus brings the freedom from sin and death, that which the Mosaic law by itself did not effect.

The Spirit of Christ brings the life which the old law was intended to grant. The law could have brought salvation had it been possible for men to keep it. This fulfillment is now given in the law of the Spirit. The law, which Paul calls "spiritual," first comes into its own through the law of the Spirit. The new law is actually the old in its fulfillment. Through the Spirit who provides the power to love (Gal. 5:14), the law of God, old (Gal. 5:14) or new (Gal. 6:2), is fulfilled.[57]

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[56]See Blaeser, XIX, 211.

[57]Cf. Bring, p. 135.

Similarly, the law is upheld (Rom. 3:31), and its requirement brought to full expression (Rom. 8:4). The spiritual program of the Mosaic law, obscured by sin, can now, in Christ Jesus, be performed in the light of the Spirit of life.

In the phrase "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," Paul uses nomos intentionally, with reference to the law of God granted to Israel. He does so in order to indicate that, in the new aeon, all that the law was intended to effect, healing and life, are now produced in people through the Spirit of Christ. In the seventh chapter of Romans Paul shows that "that other law," that is the law made ineffective by sin, forced the will of God proclaimed in the law beyond the reach of man (7:22-23). In chapter 8 Paul announces that the law, fulfilled through the life-giving Spirit of Christ, means release from the bonds of sin-wrecked law working condemnation to death. The law of God has been realized in the law of the Spirit of life. The Spirit brings the life with God which the law was intended to produce.

The requirement of the nomos is now fulfilled (Rom. 8:4). It was the nomos that Paul was discussing in chapter 7. In chapter 8 that nomos, fulfilled by Christ, is now fulfilled in those who walk in the Spirit of Christ who has given them life (8:1,3,4,11). This law can now make its demand on the man in Christ. It addresses the man who is a new creation, and its claim comes as the law of the Spirit of life, as the law of Christ.[58] The law is now understood in terms of Pneuma.

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[58]Cf. Heinrich Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, in Kritische-Exegetischer Kommentar ueber den Neue Testament, edited by Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer (13th revised edition; Goettingen: Vandenhoek & Rupprecht, c.1949, 1965), VII, 272.

It has value just because it has been fulfilled by Christ, superseded by and at the same time subsumed in Christ. Through His Spirit the man living "in the law of Christ" fulfills what the law requires. As he has been given the life which the law intends by the Spirit, so by the same Spirit he lives the life the law intends. At this point in Romans Paul found it fitting to make clear how the law is understood in the new aeon.

The life-giving Spirit brings power for performance

Paul's "law of the Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2) characterizes the power for walking according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:4).[59] The Spirit who makes alive brings the possibility of bearing the fruit of the Spirit and following His impulses (Gal. 5:22,25). The man in Christ already has fulfilled the law because Christ has achieved it for him. On the other hand, in Christ he is a new creation with the power of the Spirit of Christ to keep on fulfilling the law, as the fruit of the Spirit.

As the gospel is the power of God for salvation (Rom. 1:16), and as the reconciliation and justification effected by God leads towards salvation (Rom. 5:9-10), so the Spirit pours his love into the heart of the man in Christ; and that love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:14). In the Spirit, the law is not mere demand but life (2 Cor. 3:3,6).

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[59]A. J. Bandstra, The Law and the Elements of the World: an Exegetical Study in Aspects of Paul's Teaching (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 108, takes pneumatos of Rom. 8:2 as a genetive of source and zoes as a qualitative genetive.

The man in Christ in the new aeon experiences God's presence as power. Paul could recognize this energy at work in the people of God (Phil. 2:12-13). Without the Spirit, man's mind is paralyzed, incapable of securing life (Rom. 7:23; 1:28). But by the mercy of God in the new aeon, man has a new nous, able to determine and do the will of God (Rom. 12:2). "Nous approves the course of action but pneuma supplies the energy to perform it."[60] Since it is the Spirit who alone provides the power for doing the will of God, Paul urges the Christians in Rome not to step back under the law once again to be imprisoned by sarx and sin. Only in the Spirit of Christ is found the power for performing what God requires (Rom. 8:9,10).

## The Spirit of Christ has Replaced the Law as the Determining Factor for Christian Living

### The Spirit grants the recognition of God's claim

"If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit," wrote St. Paul (Gal. 5:25, RSV). The Spirit of the living God gives life and freedom (2 Cor. 3:3,6,17), and the power to perform the acts characteristic of expressing God's will (Gal. 5:22-25).

The law is spiritual, and because it is spiritual it can be discerned by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14). What God intended for men to hear and see, even that which was written, is now revealed through the Spirit

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[60] W. David Stacey, The Pauline View of Man (London: MacMillan & Co., 1956), p. 201.

(1 Cor. 2:9-10). To be free from the curse of the law is not the only meaning of Paul's proclamation that those under grace are no longer under the law (Rom. 6:14). Now those who are led by the Spirit are able to serve God (Rom. 7:6). In the Spirit they are able to recognize the will of God in the spiritually discerned law. The words of God entrusted to Israel may now be understood and truly received by those who in the Spirit have experienced the circumcision of the heart (Rom. 3:2; 2:29).

That claim of God on man to which the law testified is now made recognizeable to man at the same time in which it is being fulfilled. That it is being fulfilled among us (Rom. 8:4), stated in the passive form, is a reminder that we receive as a gift the ability to recognize and resoond to God's claim.

> Gott dienen kann der Mensch nur, wenn er das Gesetz geistlich hoert, wenn er im Geist durch das schriftliche Zeugnin von Gottes Willen den gnaedigen, lebendigen und konkreten Befehl Gottes selber vernimmt.[61]

In the new aeon the gift of the Spirit enables one to recognize the demand of the law as a gracious claim of God on man, so that in fact the man in Christ is not under the law but "under" grace. The written law testifies to the certainty that God speaks by promise. His claim on man comes in grace, but this is made manifest in the new aeon only by the Spirit of Christ. The gift is unconditional. The "walking" according to the Spirit to which Christians are called is not given as a prerequisite

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[61]Stalder, p. 283.

for fulfilling the law. It is a description of the result of the presence of the Spirit "among us," that is, in the fellowship of the baptized.[62]

Since the Spirit creates the recognition of God's claim on man, the law cannot be approached directly to ascertain God's will. The law can still reveal sin and proclaim judgment. But it is a source of understanding what God would have men to do only through the Spirit of Christ, who grants to men the mind of Christ. In the new aeon, the claim of God on man proclaimed by the law is fulfilled in the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:14-25).

The Spirit as the indwelling Christ is the new law

In the new aeon the Spirit is the nomos because he is the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the man in Christ. In the words of W. D. Davies,

> We can at least say that by the Spirit Christ, who was the New Torah, could dwell in the hearts of Christians. . . . the inwardness of the New Covenant of Jeremiah's hope is achieved for Paul through the indwelling Christ, the New Torah "written in the heart." The Law within him is Christ in him; the indwelling Christ has replaced the old Torah written on tablets of stone and has become a Torah written within. All this means that for Paul the true conditions of the Messianic Age when Spirit and Torah would coincide were established.[63]

In the new aeon the Spirit of Christ implants the law of Christ in the heart of the man in Christ. The law as an expression of God's will for

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[62] Ibid., p. 406.

[63] Davies, p. 226.

men to do is no longer viewed kata sarka but according to the new situation. The Spirit brings the life which the law intended and sets men free to live that life.

The law of Christ is fulfilled in Christian living only by the Spirit of Christ. It is the Spirit who makes alive. The Spirit directs the new life. There is no law against this direction because the fruit of the Spirit is the fulfilling of the law (Gal. 5:23,18,22,14). The law of Christ cannot be separated from the Spirit of Christ in order to suppose that the phrase refers to a set of Jesus' teaching or to a new principle. One cannot start with the Spirit and continue with something else (Gal. 3:2-5). That was the pattern of Qumran, and to a certain extent, that of the early church in post-apostolic times. In Qumran the concept of the Spirit was "domiciled with a 'legalistic' community."[64] In the later development of the early church the Spirit often was treated as only a helping grace to enable a man to obey the law.[65] The Spirit's function is not to provide supplementary powers, so that with His help one can fulfill the law, nor is He a new quality with which one can perform God-pleasing works. The Spirit of Christ has replaced the law as the factor which determines how the man in Christ lives.

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[64]W. D. Davies, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Flesh and Spirit," The Scrolls and the New Testament, edited by Krister Stendahl (New York: Harper & Brothers, c.1957), p. 181.

[65]Irene Beck, "Altes und Neues Gesetz," Muenchener Theologisches Zeitschrift, XV (1964), 141.

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF C

The Spirit of Christ stands in the place of the demand of the Mosaic law. Bandstra points out that the legō de of Paul (Gal. 5:16) indicates that walking by the Spirit is the new explication of the "one word" of the law (Gal. 5:14).[66] The Spirit, completely a gift of God, according to Paul's letter to Galatia is the power for the Christian's life (5:25; compare 2 Corinthians 3; Romans 8). In the second half of that Galatian passage, "let us walk in the Spirit," "man is summoned consciously to acknowledge this fact and let his conduct be wholly shaped thereby."[67] The law has ceased to be the ultimate criterion for Christian living; it has been replaced by the Spirit of Christ the Lord (Gal. 5:18; 2 Cor. 3:17).

The law is a criterion for the man in Christ only to the extent that it is appropriated as the law of Christ. The Spirit is for the man in Christ the authority over all things. Through the Spirit "the mind of Christ" becomes operative in the life of the Christian (1 Cor. 2:16).[68] The Spirit is the indwelling Christ, revealing the significance of the gifts of God, directing the course of Christian teaching (1 Cor. 2:12-13). Christian thinking and living is determined by the Spirit (Rom. 8:5; Gal. 5:16).

The Spirit determines for the Christian how he is to walk. The Christian, in whom Christ lives (Gal. 2:20), united with the crucified

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[66] Bandstra, p. 108.

[67] Schweizer, VI, 427.

[68] Cf. Longenecker, p. 182.

and risen Lord (Rom. 6:3-6), learns from the Spirit what he ought to do and to avoid. The man in Christ has within himself the ability to produce the fruit of the Spirit.

> Hence, whereas in the Old Covenant the individual was to "determine the things which are best being instructed out of the law," (Rom. 2:18) in the New Covenant the Christian is to "test all things" (1 Thess. 5:21) and "determine the things which are best" (Phil. 1:10) by reference to the Holy Spirit in his life.[69]

Under the guidance of the Spirit of Christ, in the context of the community in which the Spirit is at work, the man in Christ can continuously discern and do what the law of God intended. Thus Longenecker describes the function of the Spirit in the Christian life as follows:

> The precise function of the Spirit in this matter of the exercise of Christian liberty is probably summed up in the Apostle's use of the word dokimazō--i.e. testing, determining, proving. Cullmann has pointed this out in saying, "The working of the Holy Spirit shows itself chiefly in the 'testing' (dokomazein), that is, in the capacity of forming the correct Christian ethical judgment at each given moment, and specifically of forming it in connection with the knowledge of the redemptive process, in which, indeed the Holy Spirit is a decisive figure."[70]

## Summary

The Spirit of Christ energizes within the man in Christ that life which God intended His law to produce. Life is now given to those "in the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."

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[69]Longenecker, p. 195. On the aisthēsis as the discernment of which the man in Christ is capable, see Victor Paul Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, c.1968), p. 236.

[70]Longenecker, p. 195. Compare Furnish, pp. 104-105, 188-189.

This is so because the Spirit, the evidence of the new aeon, transmits the work of Christ to the man in Christ. For the man in Christ, the Spirit appropriates the Messiah's work of fulfilling and replacing the law.

The Spirit grants to the man in Christ the life of the new aeon. The Spirit is the presence of the Lord at work among His people. The Spirit marks the presence of the righteousness of God effected by Christ. For the man in Christ the activity of the Spirit is proof of his being a son of God.

Chapter 7 of Romans shows the plight of unregenerate man, attempting to confront the good law of God on his own. In this way chapter 7 provides the contrasting prelude to chapter 8, in which Paul proclaims that the goal of the law for life is realized through the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit, not the law, provides the power to solve the dilemma occasioned by man's sin. The Spirit is the bridge between Christ's fulfilling of the law and the individual.

In the phrase "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," Paul uses nomos with reference to the Old Testament law. That law is brought to fruition in the new aeon situation by the Spirit of Christ. He is the source of life, the life which the nomos had as its goal.

As the Spirit of Christ is the power for doing the will of God in the new aeon, He enables the man in Christ to recognize the demand of God. He is also the ultimate determining factor of what constitutes that will.

## CHAPTER V

## "IN THE LAW OF CHRIST": CONTINUING OBLIGATION TO THE LAW OF GOD

### The Old Testament Remains as a Valid Revelation of God

Paul at all times maintains the divine origin of the law, even when he is sure his contemporaries do not hear what it really says. God speaks in the Scripture, which Paul designates as nomos (1 Cor. 9:8). Whether "the law" or "the Scripture," nomos is of divine origin, God's own work.

> Even to the Christian Paul, the whole of the Old Testament remained the book of revelation, from which the only true knowledge of God was received--even if, in consequence of infection by sin, its precepts had brought to men condemnation instead of salvation; and he therefore felt it an urgent matter to understand the book, and to better understand, if possible, than the Jews understood it.[1]

The giving of the law was attended by God's doxa (2 Cor. 3:7-11). Paul can depict the divine character of the law precisely when he tells of its fading glory. The law is the holy will of God (Rom. 7:12). Paul is careful to base the theological legitimacy of freedom from the law on the fact that the law comes from God.[2]

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[1]Martin Dibelius and Werner Georg Kuemmel, Paul (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 39.

[2]Cf. Hans Wilhelm Schmidt, Der Brief des Paulus an die Roemer (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1962), p. 119.

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF

The Old Testament not being heard

The failure of Israel appeared in that she did not really listen to the law. The law was used as a basis for boasting in oneself, whereas it should have led to trust in and obedience to God (Rom. 2:17-29).[3] Israel's pursuit of the law failed because she did not hear the entire law (Rom. 2:17-24; 3:19-21; 3:27-4:23; 9:30-31).

Righteousness by Faith In the Old Testament

The law testifies to the righteousness of God. The Old Testament itself makes clear that God grants his righteousness on the basis of faith in His promise (Romans 4). The Old Testament is really a proclamation of gospel. Promise, not law, is the "good news" of the time before Christ.[4] The Old Testament teaches that faith is the basis of acceptance by God (Gal. 3:11; Rom. 3:20). Through the eyes of faith the Old Testament is confirmed and elucidated. The books of Moses are a preparation for the coming of Christ. In expectation of the coming of Christ the law held men in custody.[5]

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[3]See Rudolf Bultmann, "kauchaomai," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1965), III, 649.

[4]Peter Gottvied Verweijs, Evangelium und Neues Gesetz in der Aeltesten Christenheit bis auf Marcion (Utrecht: V. H. Kemink En Zoon, 1960), p. 53, who notes proeuēnggelisato, Gal. 3:8, and proepēnggeilato, Rom. 1:1.

[5]For this understanding of the role of the law, developed in the early church, see Ragnar Bring, Christus und das Gesetz (Leiden: E. J. Brill, c.1969), pp. 7-8. See also Heinrich Schlier, Der Brief an die Galater, in Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar ueber den Neue Testament (13th edition; Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, c.1949, 1965), III

Christ substantiates the Old Testament: "the law of Christ"--transformation and continuity

Paul affirms the validity of the law because he reads the Old Testament in the light of its having been accomplished in Christ. The hidden gospel of the law is revealed in the salvation event of Christ.[6] The Scripture is fulfilled because Jesus is the promised Messiah. This gospel was already announced in the Scriptures (Rom. 1:2). The resurrection, which is the current event, occurred according to the promise of the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3). Old Testament events received full significance in God's new action in Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). The assurance of the reckoning of righteousness for us was proclaimed to Abraham (Rom. 4:23-24). The account of Sarah and Hagar has a contemporary significance (Gal. 4:21-31). The Seed of Abraham is Christ, and the promise to Abraham of blessing for his descendants in realized for those who are baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:15-29).

The righteousness of God is manifested now (Rom. 3:21-22), and, for the Gentiles, as foretold (Gal. 3:8). The intention of the Old Testament is realized and kept in Christ. The real significance of Abraham's

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169-170; Hans Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament, translated from the German by John Bowden (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, Publishers, c.1969), p. 227. For a contrasting point of view, see Ernest D. Burton, The Epistle to the Galatians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), and D. E. H. Whiteley, The Theology of St. Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1964), p. 76.

[6]Rom. 3:31; Verweijs, p. 84.

circumcision lay in its being a sign of faith, that same faith which through Jesus Christ brings circumcision of the heart and enables Christians to be the true circumcision (Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:11; Phil. 3:3). That which was potential in the old law is achieved in the law of Christ and of His Spirit. What the prophets promised for the end-time has come.

Yet it is a new time, for in Christ one is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). The law is a valid revelation of God, but now it is subsumed under the new revelation. Now it is "the law of Christ." Those made righteous are called to surrender themselves to the Spirit of Christ, not to the Mosaic law.[7] A transformation has occurred. Paul lives no longer "under the law." At the same time, he is not "without the law," for he is "in the law of Christ." He <u>is</u> in the law, because he is in <u>Christ</u>, who has fulfilled the law. Here is the continuity. Christ came to fulfill the law. Since the Messiah has replaced it, the man in Him is now in the law of Christ. Christ did not bring any new law; he came to provide fulfillment of the law for us. Now the old law is substantiated and realized. It has found its "end."

The law is transformed but continues. The fact that the law had an interim function does not indicate a disparagement of it.[8] What was

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[7]Kurt Stalder, <u>Das Werk des Geistes in der Heiligung bei Paulus</u> (Zuerich: EVA-Verlag, c.1962), p. 354, claims that unless <u>nomos</u> occurs in a special combination or does not mean simply Scripture, it always occurs as the instrument and instance of the judging claim of God.

[8]Thus A. J. Bandstra, <u>The Law and the Elements of the World: an Exegetical Study in Aspects of Paul's Teaching</u> (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 122.

promise in the law has now become gospel. The law remains as a valid expression of God's will. This is what is implied by Paul's formulation of the phrase "the law of Christ." The Mosaic law, which receives its fulfillment in Christians through the Spirit of Christ, is the expression of the holy will of God (Rom. 8:2-4). Paul proclaimed that the law was instituted by God despite its inability to serve as a means of healing or as the norm of life. Yet because the law was neither sin itself nor against the promise of God, it is still in effect as the eternal will of God.[9]

Freedom from the law is not the announcement of new ethical content, but freedom from being bound to the law as a way of relating to God. The Christian is no longer "under the law" but he is enabled, as a child of God, to fulfill that requirement of God which was reflected in the Old Testament law. The Mosaic law and the law of Christ differ in form, but not in basic content. They are substantially the same in terms of demand; but the form of the Mosaic law is that of killing letter, while that of the law of Christ is life-giving Spirit.[10]

## Paul Adduces the Old Testament as Evidence

Birger Gerhardsson writes of Paul's view of the law:

> The Law had had its day, as it were a parenthesis between the age of promise and the age of grace, but the day of the Law has now come to an end. But the day

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[9]Note Paul's use of the law as discussed by Wolfgang Schrage, Die konkreten Einzelgebote in der paulinischen Paraenese (Gerd Mohn: Guetersloher Verlagshaus, c.1961), p. 232; cf. pp. 228-238.

[10]See further Irene Beck, "Altes und neues Gesetz," Muenchener theologisches Zeitschrift, XV (1964), 141.

> of the Scriptures is not ended. It is extremely characteristic that when Paul wants to prove that the Law has come to an end in Christ, he argues with great energy from the Law. One might go so far as to say that Paul's dependence on the Scriptures is never so much in evidence as when he is proving that the Law has been superseded.[11]

Paul uses the Old Testament as evidence for his argument, even when he is proclaiming that the righteousness of God is not achieved through nomos but by faith. In Romans Paul claims that he is upholding the law (3:31). Then in chapter 4 he shows that the Scripture itself testifies to the fact that righteousness is not granted as a result of pursuit of the law but by promise. According to Gerhardsson,

> We recognize this type of exegetical procedure from the Rabbis. To show, by means of a process of exegesis, that a certain doctrinal statement does not abolish (bitl) the Scriptures (or a passage of Scripture) is called by the Rabbis "to uphold," "to maintain" (qiim) the Scriptures (or a passage of Scripture).[12]

Paul can use the Old Testament and the traditional methods of employing it to support his arguments. For Paul the Old Testament remains revelation from God. In Galatians 3, the very chapter in which Paul describes how the law becomes a curse, Paul adduces his "for it is written," appealing to the account of Abraham in the Torah and quoting from the Torah six or seven times. When Christian freedom is not at stake, Paul can call upon the Old Testament not only as evidence for his argument against the law, but also as support for his appeals to his readers. He

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[11]Birger Gerhardsson, Memory and Manuscript (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1961), p. 284.

[12]Ibid., p. 287.

does so, for example, in the first letter to the Corinthians. For Paul, the Old Testament Torah remains a valid revelation of God, "written for our instruction" (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11).

## "In the Law of Christ"--Free to Do the Will of God

### An obligation of obedience endures

The demand for obedience is central to the Old Covenant. The faithful God calls for the faithful to respond with righteousness, in obedience to the will of Him who elected them to be holy as He is holy. Saint Paul calls upon the faithful of the New Covenant to respond by being what God in Christ has made them to be, namely the holy ones (hagioi). They are no longer slaves of sin but of God, now obedient from the heart for righteousness (Rom. 6:12-22, especially 16-17). Christians are called to produce the fruit of the Spirit, and to do that which is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:10; Gal. 5:14).

To describe the ethical imperatives of the new aeon, Paul does not spurn the term which had previously been utilized to refer to the obedience which God demands from His own, namely nomos. But Paul's usage makes clear that the sphere in which nomos comes to bear has changed; for he uses the term in new associations. Now it is the nomos tou Christou. Nomos has been subsumed under Christ. Nomos is assessed from the vantage point of the Spirit who had produced life.

Because of the danger of wanting to find justification and boasting under the law, Paul actually avoids calling for obedience to the law. Yet the law is valid. Obedience is still demanded. So Paul calls for

obedience to the law of Christ. Both the law of Moses and that of Christ call for obedience. As the Mosaic law is the expression of the demanding will of God, so also the law of Christ is the expression of the demanding will of Christ which is the will of God. The first law is not more binding than the latter. Christ worked through Paul to win obedience from the Gentiles (Rom. 15:18; compare 2 Cor. 10:5-6; Phil. 2:12).

> Righteousness is now realized by a new divine gift, accepted in faith; but this does not mean that the law as such is wrong, or that it is a misleading account of what God requires from men . . . .[13]

God's claim is now expressed in Christ, whose Spirit alone enables one to fulfill the demand of the law apprehended in Christ. "The law of Christ" is Paul's way of saying that Christians are called to an obedience that manifests itself in concrete form.

Freedom for obedience, not libertinism

Since Paul can say that there is no law against certain actions, he is indicating that not all things <u>are</u> lawful (Gal. 5:23 and 1 Cor. 10:23). Paul is no longer "under the law" (1 Cor. 9:20). The corollary of that conviction is not that he is without obligation or has achieved a complete personal freedom. He is "in the law of Christ," having received the freedom which comes with being bound to Christ as Lord. Stoic freedom, for instance, is the ability to stand above all ties, to

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[13]Charles K. Barrett, <u>From First Adam to Last</u> (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1962), p. 67.

be a self-sufficient and self-contained individual.[14] Paul's idea of freedom is that found in Christ, who enables one to become a slave of God, employing His love in service of the needs of others. There are limits to Christian liberty, channels created by the criterion that "not all things are helpful," "not all things build up" (1 Cor. 10:23). Limits are imposed by the fact that it is possible to become ensalved again to sin (1 Cor. 6:12). Libertinism is a false liberty which manifests itself as one becomes enslaved to false lords, material and spiritual. Liberty which comes from Christ manifests itself in obedience to the will of Christ, in demonstrating His love as the fulfillment of the law.

This freedom is to be found "in the law of Christ," a phrase which expresses the personal relationship of a man to Christ. It indicates both that Christ is the real life of the Christian (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21), and that the Christian lives according to the will of Christ, which has already received expression in the Torah. Christian freedom is found "in the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2). The Christian is set free from enslavement to the flesh. He has exchanged it for life in the Spirit. Freedom does not mean being released into a void but rather receiving the adoption as sons, in order to walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:1; 4:5; 5:16-25). Christian freedom is freedom <u>from</u> the power of evil <u>for</u> the opportunity to build up the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 8-10; Romans 14).

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[14]Cf. Herbert Preisker, <u>Das Ethos des Urchristentums</u> (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, c.1933, 1968), p. 176.

## Obligation of Obedience and the Spirit

An obligation of obedience accompanies the gift of the Spirit. The "law of the Spirit" is not merely the Mosaic law; it includes the will of God reflected therein. It is the law of God, the requirements of which the Spirit enables us to fulfill. In the new salvation aeon, the Spirit is opposed not to the law but to the flesh (Rom. 8:7). Those who are led by the Spirit are not under law (Gal. 5:18), but they are not lawless (1 Cor. 9:21). In the new aeon, Spirit and the demand for obedience are not antithetical. The freedom produced by the Spirit is liberty for obedience to God. The Spirit produces deeds which are the direct result of and reflection of God's action for men (Gal. 5:22-23). It is true that this obedience is prompted by the Spirit; it is motivated by the love of God poured into human hearts. The law need not be the point of reference for such obedience. The freedom from the law which the Spirit teaches leads to the recognition that the concrete claim of God does not always require the same acts of obedience. In the liberty wrought by the Spirit, a former command may be discarded because it suggests a denial of righteousness alone in Jesus Christ. This was the case with circumcision, for example, as the Judaizers understood it.[15] The law is actually being fulfilled through such obedience.

The Spirit is not a gift which obliterates the other endowments of God. The Spirit creates a new heart with which man is able to seek to know and do the will of God. The guidance of the Spirit is not

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[15]Thus Stalder, p. 347.

uninformed.[16] Paul evaluates the gift of Spirit-possession according to its ability to reflect the central teaching of the law, namely the command to love (1 Cor. 12-14). The Spirit empowers the use of informed love.

## The "Law of Christ" and Old Testament Law

In obedience to Christ, those who know themselves to be "in the law of Christ" voluntarily seek to take upon themselves obedience to the law of God, in particular as it is revealed in the Old Testament. For the sake of the gospel Paul can become a Jew to the Jews, performing for those who are actually still under the law as though he were still under law. Those "in the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" fulfill the law as revealed in the Old Testament. In the next section we will see that Paul can appeal to the law as given in the Old Testament.

The Spirit empowers the use of informed love. Out of the new relationship which is given one in Christ flows the desire to love the brother. The man in Christ seeks to obey the law of God. He seeks to reflect the love of God in concrete action. Informed love will seek to find whatever principles God may have revealed in order to express itself in action (Phil. 4:8).

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[16]Cf. W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: SPCK, c.1948), p. 198.

## Paul Makes a Variety of Appeals to Motivate Christians to Fulfill the Law of Christ

### No system in Pauline ethics

Paul was no roving rabbi, gathering disciples to instruct them in any "teaching" for a life in keeping with a rule of right conduct. Paul did not construct an ethical system or provide a special ethic to be observed. Paul's ethic is that which flows out of the breaking in of the kingdom of God in the Christ-event.[17] Paul proclaims the gift of new life in the new situation. The Christian is a new creation, equipped with the power of the Spirit. Paul's ethical statements are necessary comments on particular situations. Paul is practical, addressing himself pastorally to the needs of his congregation.

### The Pauline imperative and the Mosaic law

According to Paul, a Christian will voluntarily attempt to fulfill that law of God which is revealed in the Old Testament. Paul can and does appeal to Mosaic law. Because Paul's moral exhortations are addressed to concrete situations, and because the Spirit of Christ provides the Christian's final norm the Pauline imperative is not identical with Mosaic law. At the same time Paul does not invalidate the Old Testament law; nor does he offer a new law.

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[17]See Preisker, pp. 169-170.

## The Law of Christ and the "Law of Love"

The central command of Mosaic law, a summons to love God and neighbor, is maintained and reinforced in Paul's writings. Nevertheless, Paul's "law of Christ" is not to be equated with any "law of love."

Paul quotes the Levitical injunction for the child of God to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Gal. 5:14; Lev. 19:18). In Rom. 13:8-10 Paul summarizes the commandments of Moses (Deut. 5:17-21; Ex. 20:13-17), indicating that the central thrust of those precepts is that love of the neighbor which determines to avoid whatever may be detrimental to him.

This is not a unique observation on the part of Paul. Contrary to popular understanding, the New Testament is not the shrine of the golden rule. Nor is any "law of love" the pearl of great price.

In the teachings of Judaism, the law of love is a rather commonly expressed obligation of the child of God. It occurs in such writings as the Letter of Aristeas (#207) and in the Book of Tobit (4:15), produced at least one hundred years before Christ. In the tradition about Hillel we find the assertion that the commandment to love is the sum of the whole Torah.[18] It matters little that we have the statement expressed in the negative instead of the positive in some of the

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[18]Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, c.1926), I, 907: "Hillel, um 20 v. Chr.: Was dir unliebsam ist, das tu auch du deinem Naechsten nicht. Das ist die ganze Tora, das andere ist ihre Auslegung." See also pp. 357, 460.

occurrences of the golden rule in Judaism.[19] In late Judaism the golden rule is widely expressed and treasured as providing the sum of the law.[20]

It has been suggested at times that for Paul the law in the new covenant is reduced to ethical principle. The permanent element and essential demand of the law is now the "law of love." According to Raymond T. Stamm, "the law of Christ is not a law in the legal sense of the word, but the life principle of all who take up his cross of creative suffering."[21] Ernest D. Burton claims that "both Jesus and Paul discover in the law certain fundamental ethical principles, and declare that in them the law consists."[22] The law of Christ, moreover, is said to be "the law of God as enunciated by Christ . . . consisting not in a body of statutes, but in the central and all-inclusive principle of love."[23] It is identified as the "law of love" by George Eldon Ladd.

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[19]So Conzelmann, p. 120.

[20]Albrecht Dihle, Die Goldene Regel (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, c.1962), p. 8. See especially pp. 82-84 concerning the law of love in Judaism. Dihle includes an explanation of how the golden rule, an abstraction or generalization as compared to Hebrew thought, became prominent in the Hellenistic period. See also the extended discussion with examples in Hugo Odeberg, Pharisaism and Christianity, translated by J. M. Moe (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1964), pp. 16-28. Note also that the criterion most commonly found in Judaism is not the need of the neighbor, but formal authority, according to Conzelmann, p. 20.

[21]Raymond D. Stamm, in The Interpreter's Bible (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1953), X, 574.

[22]Burton, p. 448.

[23]Ibid., p. 329.

However, he emphasizes that the new life in Christ empowered by the Spirit enables the Christian to do that for which the external written code was powerless.[24] Wolfgang Schrage asserts that "not the law, but the law of Christ, understood as the command to love, is the highest norm of the Christian life."[25]

The danger in these opinions is that the law of Christ might be reduced to a "law of love" standing independently, with a deletion of the Pauline proclamation of the breaking in of the new aeon. For Paul the love by which the law is fulfilled must be a gift of God, by the new creation. It follows from faith (Gal. 5:6) and must not be described as an ethical principle. The "law of love" is not a human achievement. Paul would insist that love is a derivative of the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). The good deeds of Gal. 5:22 are the work of God. They are acts of God implanted in His new creation by the Spirit. Paul cannot forget that works of love are the result of the indwelling Christ (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:9).

Christian love is that commanded response to the love of God displayed in the salvation action of Christ. It is not some moral principle to be applied piecemeal to each occasion. Love is not "an ideal to be striven for," but something which "is and can be practiced wholly and completely."[26] Paul can point to love as a word to epitomize the law of

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[24]George Eldon Ladd, "Paul and the Law," Soli Deo Gloria: New Testament Studies in Honor of William Childs Robinson, edited by J. McDowell Richards (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, c.1968), p. 66.

[25]Schrage, p. 255.

[26]Conzelmann, p. 278.

God; but he does not attempt to distill a law or a new law from the Mosaic law as the new ethic. His "law of Christ" is not to be diluted into a "law of love." Had Paul used the term "Law of love" it probably would have meant the love of God already manifested in the Torah but now realized and fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Christ. It could mean the revelation of a new ideal to be pursued for righteousness (compare Rom. 9:31).

## The Appeal to Mosaic Law

Paul does not call for obedience to Mosaic law. Yet he does appeal to it when Christian freedom is not the issue. According to Romans 4 and Galatians 3, salvation never was to be sought on the basis of obedience to the ordinances of the law. Paul was rejecting that misuse of the law which was identified by the gift of the events of the new aeon. Salvation always came by faith and not by obedience to the law. Paul does not call for obedience to the law as the norm for the Christian life. Instead he places demands on his converts, which have their parallels in Mosaic law. But Paul does not seek authority for his demands in the Mosaic law, but in the Spirit of Christ. Paul avoids appealing to nomos, using instead thelēma (Rom. 12:2), or entolē (1 Cor. 7:19), that which is euarestos (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:9; Phil 4:19; Col. 3:20), or "the law of Christ." The last phrase expresses Paul's understanding best of all. The Mosaic law continues in force, but it is absorbed in Christ.[27]

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[27]E. Baemmel, "Nomos Christou," Texte und Untersuchungen, Studia Evangelica, edited by F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, c.1964), III, 125.

When Christian freedom is not at stake, in the interest of furthering the gospel of Christ,[28] Paul does not oppose the observance of the law. To be "in the law of Christ" means to assert that despite the fact that the believing Christian is free in regard to the Mosaic law, the law is good and its requirements are assumed voluntarily.

Therefore Paul can appeal to what is written in the Old Testament as the pattern of behavior for the Christians in Rome (12:19-20). There are several direct appeals to the Old Testament in the first letter to the Corinthians. The most obvious is that occurring in 9:8-9, "Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.'"[29] In this case, of course, the Old Testament command is not given by Paul as a direct edict for Christians. Through a particular heremeneutical method it is applied by Paul to the situation in an accomodated sense.[30]

We have referred to "keeping the commandments of God" (1 Cor. 7:19), and "written for our instruction" (10:11). Once Paul comments "as even the law says" (1 Cor. 14:34), a saying which does not occur word for word anywhere in the Old Testament, nor even in late Jewish

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[28]Peter Blaeser, "Das Gesetz bei Paulus," Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, edited by Max Meinertz (Muenster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1941), XIX.1-2, 226.

[29]RSV translation. The gar of verse 9, "For it is written," strengthens the authority of the quotation.

[30]Blaeser, XIX, 230.

literature.[31] Either Paul is referring loosely to Gen. 3:16,[32] or this may be an indication that for Paul a traditional midrash may have an authority approaching that of the Torah itself.

In Paul's second letter to Corinth he employed Old Testament passages as part of his argument. They are taken both from the law of Moses and from the prophets (6:16-18; 10:17; 13:1). The law is not adduced in these passages as final proof, but as confirmation and support of Paul's appeal. The law can then be employed to find guidance for the life of the Christian community.

The Pauline imperative derives from the indicative.

The primary appeal of Paul for his Christian friends to do what is right is based on what God has already done for them. Paul can appeal to Christians that they fulfill the law of Christ because he has already proclaimed that Christ has acted in such a way as to create a new relationship with God. Paul's "ethic" is the result and expression of the new life which has come to the man in Christ because he has been given the righteousness of God. Paul's imperative is not something which can be placed side by side with his indicative. The imperative flows out of the indicative.[33] The imperative is "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22-23). The fruit of the Spirit which Paul lists, love, peace, joy

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[31] Ibid., XIX, 36.

[32] Thus ibid.

[33] See especially Victor Paul Furnish, Theology and Ethics in Paul (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, c.1968), pp. 224-225. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1951), I, 332-333.

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, are, in fact, descriptions of the way that God has already acted toward men. Paul's imperative is the response of the man in Christ to the already effected action of God in Christ.

Between the Pauline indicative and imperative there is a dynamic relationship.[34] God's grace and righteousness are gifts which produce a new style of life (Rom. 5:21-6:19). In union with his risen Lord, the man baptized into Christ receives new power; set free from sin, he is alive to God in Christ (Romans 6). Paul's imperative is not a "you must" but a "you will." The free gift of God is that new life by which a man is enabled to use his body and mind for acts reflecting God's righteousness. The Christian is no longer a slave of sin; he is no longer under the domination of the law (Rom. 6:6; 7:4). When Paul appeals to Christians to fulfill the law of Christ, the imperative of the appeal is derived from the victory effected by Christ. That is why "the law of Christ" cannot be thought of as commands or a law given by Christ. The law of Christ is God's will for man understood from the perspective of the new relationship to God in Christ. Standing "in the law of Christ," Paul knows himself able to reflect the love of God according to the needs of the situation because of the power of the Christ within him.

Paul does have an imperative. He calls upon Christians who have received the Spirit of God to live accordingly. He calls for the right

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[34]See Preisker, p. 65.

application of freedom (Gal. 5:13). He insists that Christians, who have received the righteousness of God, should reflect God's gift by avoiding "the works of the flesh" and anything which would not correspond to their new situation. For Paul, "every article of the kerygma is connected with moral exhortation."[35] But the moral exhortation is at the same time a reflection of the kerygma, an expression of the new situation in Christ.

### The imperative of the law of Christ determined by the man in Christ

For Paul not only the Mosaic law but the entire Old Testament is a valid expression of how God would have His people live. That is what the phrase "the law of Christ," in part, suggests. Yet the final authority for moral responsibility before God is the Spirit of Christ, through whom Christ is present and at work in the hearts of the faithful. Paul has no system of ethics. He does not say precisely what the content of the law of Christ is in its entirety. But he assumes that his Christian friends will be able to know and do what the law of Christ demands.

At various times Paul seems to indicate that the Christian's norm is the gospel, or Christ, or the Spirit, or faith (Phil. 1:27; 2:5; Gal. 5:17-6:8; Rom. 12:3). There is a sense in which for Paul the man in Christ, in living fellowship with Christ, is his own law. That is a dangerous statement, in that it can easily be misunderstood as supporting

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[35]Whiteley, pp. 205-206. Whiteley provides illustrations.

a libertinistic attitude or suggesting antinomianism. But then it must be recalled that Paul can speak of his being in Christ and of Christ being in him. Christ, for Paul, was his own life. Through Baptism one is incorporated into Christ. To fulfill the law of Christ is to live according to one's new being, to make imperatives out of the indicative of one's new situation in Christ. No set of rules can determine how one ought to live out the implications of being a new creation in Christ.

So Paul appeals to Christians to be what they are, to live according to the gospel (Rom. 12:1-2). Paul calls upon the Christians at Philippi, for example, to think, speak, and act in a manner consistent with the gospel they have accepted (Phil. 1:27-2:16). Christians are to use their faith as that factor which will determine how they are to act toward each other (Rom. 12:3-13). Paul assumes the validity of the law of God as known in the Old Testament. Still, because of the new situation in Christ, the Spirit of Christ must supply the final course of action.

Paul appeals to the example of Christ as a guideline as well as basis of motivation. At one point he specifically indicates that he imitates Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). T. W. Manson goes so far as to claim that "the standard of human behavior is set by an act of God rather than a mere demand of God. That act of God is identified with the ministry of Jesus."[36] Davies supports Dodd's suggestion that

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[36]T. W. Manson, "Jesus, Paul, and the Law," Judaism and Christianity, edited by Erwin I. J. Rosenthal (London: Sheldon Press, 1938), III, 139.

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF

the exhortation to love and the description of it in 1 Corinthians 13 is based upon the life of Jesus, "in short a kind of character sketch of the Lord."[37]

However, when Paul speaks of Christ's love for men, he does not refer to Jesus' earthly acts of compassion. He cites the crucial, cosmic events of salvation. He adduces Christ's death (Gal. 2:20) and the redemptive significance of His death and resurrection (2 Cor. 5:14). He details the events leading to Christ's present reign in power for His people; thereby they are assured of His constant love (Rom. 8:34-35). When Paul appeals to Jesus' example it is to that humility which He displayed in the Incarnation from the time of His pre-existence as well as during His earthly life (Phil. 2:5-8; 2 Cor. 8:9). Accordingly, we should not expect that Paul would stress the words of the earthly Jesus any more than His deeds of love toward His disciples. To fulfill the law of Christ is to exhibit in faith, word and deed all that Christ the Son of God means for the man in Christ.

Paul asks Christians to imitate not only Christ but also the man in Christ. To motivate Christians to fulfill the law of Christ, Paul suggests to his brothers in Christ that they follow his own example. Collectively they should imitate him (Phil. 3:7), remembering that he was responsible for their coming to faith (1 Cor. 4:16). He gave them a reliable example to follow by the manner of his life in their midst (1 Thess. 1:6). Paul does not spell out precisely what it is that he did that should be imitated by those whom he addresses. In his first

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[37]Davies, p. 147.

letter to Corinth he suggests that "whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 11:1; 10:31). That is a general description based on the right kind of attitude. It is, of course, not a definite prescription. Paul expects those who were in contact with him to be able, by the power of the Spirit of Christ, to determine precisely what they should do in the light of Paul's general example. Paul could appeal to the example of other Christians as a pattern of behavior also (1 Thess. 2:14).

In the light of and by the mercy of God's new creative act in Christ, Paul appeals to Christians to use their Spirit-guided intelligence to determine what the law of Christ is for their living. This can be seen for instance when Paul encourages the Christians to give themselves in a worship to God which is pleasing because their entire rational faculty is included. In Christ they have new thinking (hē anakainōsis tou noos) with which they are able to discover (dokimazō) what God's will is and follow it in relating to each other (Rom. 12:1-3). It is not as though they have minds which are not able to reason properly, so as to do those things which are not fitting (Rom. 1:28, adokomos nous). In the new aeon those who are the new creation have, in the Spirit of Christ, the capacity to determine what to do in order to fulfill the law of Christ.

Not only the law as revealed in the Mosaic law, but other Jewish, Stoic or general Gentile ethical advice can be adopted by Paul in order to encourage Christians to be God's new creation.[38] Paul expects them

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[38]Preisker, p. 169.

to apply what is fitting to their situation. Richard N. Longenecker has shown how in writing to Corinth (1 Corinthians 7) Paul avoids the use of the law to motivate. Instead he appeals to functional reasons to support his argument. His criteria are the expectation of Christ's return, Christian purposes, present circumstances, and harmony within the Christian community.[39] And in a helpful study on this very subject titled "Faith and Reason in Paul's Epistles," Guenther Bornkamm comments on Paul's approach on the basis of the first letter to Corinth (11:2-16),

> The main theme of Paul's instructions is his appeal to the new being which the believers have received through Christ. But he avoids the assertive style of the lawgiver, takes care to see that the believers can understand his instructions and is not afraid to support them with rational arguments of general reason.[40]

He adds concerning Paul's appeal in an earlier part of the letter (1 Cor. 8:1),

> Only love can provide true, legitimate reasonable arguments, which look not only on one's "own things," but also take others into consideration (Phil. ii.4). It is significant that Paul does not just talk about "love" in this connection, but tries to make its inner necessity and logic comprehensible to the congregation.[41]

According to Paul, Christians have an obligation to fulfill the law of Christ. The content of that law is certainly to be sought in the Old Testament, in which God revealed to Israel His will for man. But the

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[39]Richard N. Longenecker, Paul, Apostle of Liberty (New York: Harper & Row, c.1964), pp. 238-239.

[40]Guenther Bornkamm, "Faith and Reason in Paul's Epistles," New Testament Studies, IV (1957-1958), 99.

[41]Ibid.

final determination of the content of the law of Christ will be made by those who are God's new creation to discover and do that which reflects their new situation in Christ. Thus they fulfill the law of Christ.

## Summary

For Paul, the law could be nothing other than the holy will of God. The events of the new aeon validate the old revelation. The law still accurately reflects God's will. At the same time, the old is subsumed under the new.

The demand of obedience, proclaimed in the law, is not revoked. Christian freedom manifests itself in obedience to Christ. Led by the Spirit, the man in Christ seeks and does God's will. He voluntarily looks to the law revealed in the Old Testament for guidance in that task.

Paul creates no new ethical system, no law of love to replace the Torah. Paul proclaims God's eschatological event as the power for salvation. The basic content of God's commandments has not changed. In Christ one encounters a new situation in which the ability to follow God's will is granted.

The man in Christ, possessing the Spirit of Christ, can ascertain what that will of God will be in daily contexts. Paul appeals not only to the Old Testament but also to the example of Christ and men in Christ as providing the pattern for Christian living.

GERBERDING - PAUL AND "THE LAW OF

# CONCLUSION

Our study has shown that by means of the phrase "the law of Christ" Paul points to the continuity in God's salvation action for mankind. The expression was created by Paul for a particular purpose.

We do not have firm evidence for an actual prototype for the Pauline idiom in the materials which were examined for this investigation. The only parallels encountered employ "law" concretely rather than as an abstract term or a play on words. The present study did not attempt an examination of all of rabbinic literature in detail. Future research needs to be done in that area. This might also include scrutiny of the Targums to uncover parallels which could help to clarify the form of Paul's phrase.

However, the significance of the expression can be deduced without positing some prototype as model. The meaning can be comprehended by taking seriously both Paul's use of nomos in its usual reference to Mosaic law, and also of Paul's proclamation that the man in Christ is God's creation for the new aeon.

Since Paul uses "new creation" terminology, one might suppose that the word "law" in the phrase "the law of Christ" refers to some new law as opposed to the old. Perhaps Paul is suggesting that Christ has come to be a new law-giver, delivering new statutes to supplement or replace the laws of the former dispensation.

This study has demonstrated that, according to Paul, Christ has replaced the old law with himself, not with new ordinances. At the same time, he has ratified God's old covenant law in that he has fulfilled it.

He himself brings the life which the law was intended to produce but could not. For Paul, Christ is the object of faith, not the giver of new statutes. Paul calls for obedience to Christ himself, not to a set of new commandments. Paul does not call for adherence to a new messianic torah.

Christ has fulfilled the law. The promise of the law that it would lead to righteousness has been realized through his work. The law has been conformed by what Christ has achieved. "The law of Christ" is Paul's way of saying that the demand and promise of the law is attainable in Christ. In this way the phrase indicates the continuity between the old and new in God's activity.

Paul does not call for Christians to attempt to fulfill the law on their own. They are called to "the law of Christ." What the law demands can be achieved only in Christ. The demand and promise of the law has been subsumed under Christ. Therefore Christ is the end of the law, having replaced it in God's plan for the healing of man.

In the new aeon, the life which the law offered is created within man by the Spirit of Christ. The operation of the Spirit is the evidence of the new aeon, the proof of the presence of God and the gift of his righteousness. The Spirit appropriates the work of Christ to the man in Christ.

As shown in the seventh and eighth chapters of Romans, the Spirit, not the law, provides the power to solve the plight of man under sin. In the expression, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,"

the word "law" is the old covenant law brought to fruition in the new aeon by the Spirit of Christ.

The Spirit provides for the man in Christ Jesus both the insight to determine what the will of God is and the power for living according to the same. Still, in ascertaining what the will of God is, the man in Christ is led by the Spirit to recognize the law as holy. It accurately reflects God's intentions for the life of man. The events of the new aeon validate the former revelation. Paul did not create a new ethical system, nor promote one supposedly established by his Lord. The basic content of the former commandments has not changed and still applies.

Paul appeals to what is written in the law. That law remains valid for one who has been made new by the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit enables one to do what the law requires. Therefore Paul appeals to Christians to fulfill "the law of Christ."

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